

Ryūan-shū  
Tōkyō

POEMS

written

in

Ceylon

and

INDIA

1754-1854

Tamblimutto

MARIANNE  
MOORE  
FESTSCHRIFT

BY  
VARIOUS HANDS

TAMBIMUTTU

Baskin





FOR OUR ABSENT GURU, RAMMURTI SHRIRAM MISHRA

The space within the pitcher, filled with sound like the whorled chank  
Is the concentered speech of *sattva*,<sup>o</sup> your round words opening out in bright rings  
In the immeasurable ocean, which is timeless and shoreless.

Did you once merge with that? What was it like, was it hot  
And fiery like your inward-turned eyes? Was it  
Beginningless and endless like Shiva's pillar of fire

Interpenetrating the Absolute, the Zero, the Supreme?  
Exfoliating, folding, like a water-lily, it is sacrifice lifts us up in smoke and flame  
We are the instruments, or victims, of the cosmic sacrifice.

Living is action. We can't be without breathing, thinking and dreaming,  
And actions may have no moral value. But those of *yajnas*, the rituals of sacrifice  
Lead us to paramount states, the deities, the most important functions of man.

Through your gentle and voluntary acceptance of the ritual of sacrifice  
You have taken your place in the cosmic symphony, as an equal;  
The only purpose of your existence is the performance of this ritual.

*You are the hearthstone, and your words are the fire,  
Your breath is the smoke and your tongue the flame,  
Your eyes are the fuel and your ears the sparks:  
In this eternal fire we offered ourselves  
And you were born.*

And was it like that, in the family hearth, of the daily fire, of Sarasvati Devi  
Shriram Mishra, your mother?  
Finally, was it a gong, the cooing of the kokila, the tinkling of bells, a flute, a  
lute, or a bee?  
And when the mind was stilled, did you hear the hair-raising inner sound?

You grew giddy, but ignoring the inner sound which engulfed you  
Did you merge with *shabda* -- The Principle of the Word, and hear the sound  
Never before heard, which rises in the heart, pervading all?

You could have told me, but you didn't.

*The goddess is the hearth, and Shiva the fire,  
Courtship is smoke, and yoni the flame;  
The penetration is the fuel, pleasure the spark:  
In this fire the gods sacrifice semen  
And the child is born.*

<sup>o</sup> The centripetal tendency toward a center, toward more cohesion, more concentration, more existence, more reality -- toward light, perfection, illumination or divine reality.



## II

The space within the pitcher is not separate from the space outside:  
It was not distinct before the pitcher was made:  
It will not be distinct once the pitcher is broken

And is not, therefore, distinct while the pitcher exists.

*Tat tvam asi* -- Thou art That, -- the extraordinary phenomenon  
Of the continually expanding form, which sweetly grows

Into the undifferentiated continuum of the Supreme Spirit,  
Limitless, undifferentiated, indivisible

The divisions of space between you and us is mere appearance.

You must tell me, when we meet again.

## III

I met you briefly, between stops, between this point and another,  
Before the curtain fell, the scenery was rolled away, and the music stilled.  
The big drums of the eyes throbbed and nearly broke in your ashram

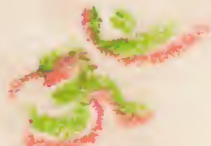
And the answering note in your vibrant throat had the reeds and ducks trembling  
-- The reeds and ducks of the lake you knew, which were so much a part of you --  
And the drops were shaken from the hot-eared leaves of the apple trees that en-  
shrined you.

You were the feeding crescent of the infant moon, for me, on the white - as - milk  
brow of Shiva.

Return, return, so we may all drink of its *amrita*<sup>oo</sup> when it's cup is full  
In this Monroe, and the future Monroes, the brilliant jewels of your steps.

We offer fire to fire, fuel to fuel,  
Smoke to smoke and flame to flame,  
Matter to matter and sparks to sparks:  
Into fire do the gods offer your speech.  
From this searing burning we have seen your person  
With the color of light.

TAMBIMUTTU



22. viii. 1966  
Monroe, N.Y.

for Shakti  
with Love  
from Daddy

<sup>oo</sup> Elixir, or the dew of life; the moon is the cup from which the gods drink *amrita* when it is full.



# PSYCHEDELIC REVIEW



4034 - 20th STREET • SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94114

10 Jan 72

Dear Tambimuttu:

Joy, joy. We have located your excellent manuscript-- Gita Sarasvati. I can see why you were concerned. It is very fine and I hope you publish it and see that it gets maximum exposure. If we can assist in any way, let us know.

Also looking forward to seeing the back issues in book form for early distribution from both of us. We have an accumulation of orders already.

Peace,

*Bob Mogar*

Robert E. Mogar, Ph.D.  
Editor





G I T A   S A R A E V A T I :  
A Theology for Modern Science

The Creation and Dissolution of Kosmos

Tambimuttu



In the beginning was God (brahmapatir vai idam asit);

And with him was the Word (śaśva vāc dyāvāya asit);

And the Word is God (Vāc vai paramam brahma).

With the cracking glacier sound, with thunder of time's hooves on  
the mountain

The great horse of the sacrifice is in the mountain.

The timeless sound of the loach-sound is in the intricate ear,

With the roaring sound, Ham, so speaks the Word, Vak, <sup>The Uddar</sup> ~~which is woman~~,  
The <sup>multi-</sup>multicolored tree of Shiva's energy, which is woman, Sarasvati,  
Whose every branch, root and spray is the ancient veneration  
of our knowledge;

Green and quivering on the mountain top  
half in green leaf and half in flame  
Like the tree of the Celtic Macgibbon

-- The Welsh Word by the broad river of time

Pulsing and bright as a shaft of light to the Void, Shiva --

The poetic word, with several overlays of meaning

Not closely cropped and shaved for discursive or journalistic use

Colliding, with another in the sentence of poetry,

Colliding, bounding, detouring, with several outflexions  
of meaning



ChB is the second page that was skipped by Diddy

Which criss-cross and outflow again, creating new words  
Which repeat the process to infinity, to create the poem.

The poetic word should contain layers, accumulated masses  
of meaning.

Ideally, it would be the whole poem, dancing with other poems to make a  
sentence.

The Word, the word, Veda, Veda... the immense word

In which are telescoped all sounds, meanings, forms;  
In the miniscule, the great word of the back-drop in the theatre,  
the mountain, the prairie,  
The great word of the poem and epic, and, then, the immense word  
of the universe

Leaves of grass sum of the books and learning in libraries,  
The seed-word (bīja), the semen of Shiva (bījavan), in Sarasvati,  
Is the creator of the kosmos...

The Word works the turning cog-wheels of the Kosmos,  
The spheres in the heavens  
And the revolving, bright spheres in our minds.



In the beginning was the Word  
And the Word was with God  
And the Word was God  
Was the chanking echo from Kosmos.

The Word is said and the Thing appears.  
It said, in Hebrew, "'Let there be Light(Aur)'" and there was Light(Aur).  
The Word creates: the thought molds matter

And the worlds came tumbling in with the tongue of jazz...

Weaving the Mediterranean Logos of Heraclitus,  
Plato, and the Alexandrian, Philo, who showed the way  
To the deliverer of the Fourth Gospel.

The Word(Vac) was made flesh; but there is a difference in ideas  
Between the "'perennial philosophy'" (sanātana dharma), the remnant  
Of a universal store of knowledge, the possession once of all mankind

And Christianity. To dharma (Eternal - Law) God is the material cause  
of the world. It's matter.

To the dualism of the Christian Logos it is not. To dharma, the  
Word is not incarnated in

One historical person, but in all matter and men.

3.  
The Word was made flesh, not in one historical place,

In one particular person, on one particular date.

It appeared from THAT, which is Shiva, and now appears in the flesh  
and other forms of matter

*After the break on page 13, it goes back to this*  
Of all individual living beings, or jivas, limited as they are,  
Each of whom, through Veda, the Word, the Multifoliate, flowing  
tree of the Scriptures

May directly become Shiva, whose Sarasvati, the female energy,  
is the Word: Vak:

The Christ figure, alone, walked the earth as God in human form,  
With the remnant of the universal store of knowledge, a crown of  
thorns, a sacred rosary in his hands,  
And the voice of bombed London, the Congo and Vietnam, sent to the  
skies

Cried with expanding, cosmos-sized words, "What about me?"

The Christ, alone, was God in human form  
Others were not, are not,  
And will never be.

But Vak, the Word, manifests herself in every man  
And is knowable and known as Sarasvati is in herself  
That is Shiva, in that spiritual experience which is the Veda,  
or the Word.



4

In the beginning was God (Prajāpati vai idam āsit);

And with him was the Word (Tasya vāg dvitīya āsit);

And the Word is God (Vag vai paramam Brahma);

So that the sentient rose of flesh, the fiery boulder and mountain,  
All forms of matter, atomic beings (Jivas) 'spotted through' with Life,  
May through the Word become It, Shiva itself, whose creative energy is  
Sarasvati, caressing the vina,

The talking, human lute,

Capable of conversation, or producing all sounds; Who wears the brilliant  
garland of light round her slender neck

Which is the Letters, the Syllables, the Words and Sentences of Speech (Vak).

Sarasvati riding the wild goose, the Gander, Han-sa, that abstract bird of  
light,

Whose very name is the mystic and real symbol of all breathing things:

The natural name of the vital breath, manifested as the expiring (ham),

and the inspiring (sah), of all breathing creatures -

Linked as they are, to the pulsation of the Cosmic Gander, the universe,  
expanding and contracting,

Breathing in and out, as plants do, though on different time scales;

And inert matter breathes also, ringing in the book of changes.

5

Saraswati rides the Swan, the Wild Goose, the hamsah,  
Which swims on the surface of the water, but is ~~not~~ bound to it.  
Flying through space, it migrates, north and south, following the seasons.

Divine Essence, hamsah, free wanderer between the celestial and earthly  
spheres,

Descending on the waters of the earth, taking wing again to the utmost  
on high

You are the divine substance which is embodied in us, and yet unconcerned  
with us.

We are earth-bound, limited in life strength, in virtues and  
consciousness,

But as a spark of the divine, which is unlimited, immortal, virtually  
omniscient and all - powerful,

We are wanderers of the two spheres, like the wild gander.

The macrocosmic gander (hamsa), the Supreme Self in the body of the  
Universe,

Whose song of inhaling (ham) and exhaling (sah) is the sound the yogi hears  
when he ~~hears~~ controls the rhythm of his breath (pranayama)

Is said to be a manifestation of the "inner gander" which is within us.

Thus, by constantly humming its own name, ham-sa, hamesa in our breath  
The inner presence reveals itself to the yogi-initiate...

The song of the "inner gander" has a final secret to disclose:



Ham-sa, Ham-sa it sings, but at the same time, with the syllables reversed,

"So-ham, so-ham," it insists; and since Sa means "this", and Ham "I",  
The lesson is this: "This I am, This I am," rippling in the <sup>music</sup> ~~infinite lake~~  
of the breath.

The individual "I" of limited faculties, sodden with delusion  
Tight and four-square, hooped like a barrel in the Maya or Illusion of  
World-Appearance

Am actually This, He, Self (Atman), the highest Self,

Of unlimited consciousness and existence.

"I am He (Paramatman), who is free and divine."

Every moment of inhalation and exhalation asserts the Supreme Void in whom  
breath abides, "And," sings the glorious bird  
*Here he says it's incomplete, I'm going on to page 10 (this is the Indian version) he goes on in the top*  
"When the sun and moon have disappeared, I float and swim with slow  
movements on

The boundless expanse of the waters. I am the Lord, and I am the Gander."

Sarasvati rides the Ham-sa, the breath-spark of the Universe.

Without her there is no Creation. And she proceeds from the  
nothingness that is Shiva. But how can that be?

7.  
"How can Being be produced from non-Being?" the Indians questioned;  
In the beginning there must have been pure Being, One, and without a  
second.

Through yoga, through introspection, they had become conscious

Of an ultimate void within themselves. "Of a stage beyond thought  
and dream,

Beyond perception and knowledge, motionless, indescribable, unbounded  
by space and  
time," omnipresent.

Was this void the causal principle? Was there a motionless substratum for  
matter

And a substratum for time, as there seemed to be one for thought?

Were these different substrata, the forms of a still more subtle one,  
the indescribable Shiva?

The Indian philosophers of the Upanishads thought deeply before they  
built a model for  
the universe.

When we try to find the root of any aspect of the created world

We begin to imagine, there must exist beyond its form

Some sort of causal state, some indifferentiated  
continuum.



*of which the artificial form is (81) a seeming development*  
The first of the continua underlining all perceptible forms appears  
to be space.

Absolute empty space is conceived as a limitless, undifferentiated,  
indivisible continuum

In which reside the imaginary divisions of space. The seeming localization  
Of heavenly bodies, and their movements, creates the illusion of a  
division of space.

Similarly, time is indivisible. Absolute time is an ever-present eternity  
which seems inseparable from space.

Relative time results from the apparent division of space by the rhythm  
of the heavenly bodies.

The third continuum known to us is thought. Everything exists with a form  
within a coordinated system.

It seems to be the realization of a plan, the materialization of an  
dream. organized

Hence the visible universe was conceived as the form of the thought of its  
creator.

Whenever we go to the root of anything, we find no longer a substance,  
but a mere form, a concept,

Whose nature can be identified with that of thought.

9.  
And since the cosmos is a creative process, the manifestation  
of a conscious power,

We are led to search for an active, or conscious, substratum for each of  
the perceptible phenomena,

Which proceed from the goddess Sarasvati from whom is Nature born  
(Prakriti)  
whose substratum is Shiva, whose creative energy she is.

The substratum of space is existence (sat);

The substratum of time is experience or enjoyment (ānanda);

The substratum of thought is consciousness (Cit).

And so sat-cit-ānanda. The Goddess appears at the root of the three  
aspects  
(guna-s) of existence

As Reality, Consciousness and Experience 1 in all satchitānanda.

As Reality, she is the power of co-ordination, the centripetal 11holding11  
tendency visible in the sun.

As Experience or pure absolute enjoyment, the innermost nature of  
existence,  
she is the power of the centrifugal disintegrating tendency,  
visible in fire.

As consciousness, she is the power of understanding, the revolving  
tendency visible in the moon.

Creation arises from this triple form of power, of which Shiva's trident is  
the symbol.

She is Saraswati, the goddess of speech, of music and poetry. She is the  
"creation by the Word."

The Word or Sound (Shabda) <sup>brings meaning or object</sup> (Artha) and Pratyak  
(Mental Apprehension) to us

But to normal men, Shiva in his <sup>transcendent</sup> quiescent state  
Is soundless (anahata), is <sup>not a</sup> ~~not a~~ <sup>meaningless</sup> object (nirvishaya), and  
is beyond our comprehension.

In the transcendental Shiva, therefore, there is  
Neither name (nama) nor form (rupa).

In this Infinite Calm of It (Shiva) there arises now a metaphysical  
Point of Stress or Bindu

Which stirs forth (prasarati), as the multiple forces of the universe.

It is through this Bindu, the point limit, where the universal being  
and the individual being unite

The universe is manifested and then withdrawn again at the dissolution.

This movement is Shiva, through Desire, or Love (Kama), through the  
stress of the One wishing to be Many,

The movement through his Lady Saraswati, Sakshi, or the flowing one,  
is Creation

The universe is the result of the Divine Desire (Kama) or Will (Iccha).

In the <sup>physical</sup> world the Divine Desire (Kama) is, among other things,  
<sup>sexual desire</sup>

In the <sup>transcendent</sup> it is the first creative impulse of the One to be  
<sup>nothing</sup>

Many



Transcendent Love constantly works through individual sex-impulse for the  
continued

Creation of the universe. The Divine Sarasvati in Shiva (She as abstract  
as himself) is eternal and the beginning of all things.

spoke  
And thus ~~Parmenides~~ of another century: 'He divised Eros the first of  
all the Gods'.

'Flow' or 'Motion' (Saras) is the accent of her lovely name: Saraswati  
White are her garments and transparent whiteness is the color of Ether  
(Ākāśa)

and the cosmic Intellect (buddhi).

The flowing One is 'She Who goes pure from the mountain to the sea.'

Sacred river, now called the Sarsuti, that falls from the high Himalayas  
into our echoing minds and bodies,

'Watery and elegant' the Saraswati river, is your name: flood of fertility  
your

hips like ripe fruits, your thighs curved as the sand-banks,  
You flow in and around the static Ether which materialized at the Creation.

With the roaring sound 'Ham', and then stood rigid

As the still sea of ether on which the whole universe opens and flows  
As the World-experience, with its dualism of subject and object.

This dual play of Saraswati, of subject and object, takes place in the  
Ether of Consciousness (Cidakāśa)

In such a way that Consciousness (cit) is neither effaced, or affected,  
When transcendence of the false dualism and Immanence with the Primal  
Cause

Is achieved through the yogic, psychedelic, the saintly, or poetic  
ecstasy.

This is creation (Srṣṭi) or, more properly, seeming development (Parināma)  
Since the English word 'Creation;' involves an absolutely first appearance,

and does not truly describe the process.

*goes on to pg. 13 to  
The Supreme  
Sard*

It excludes the notion that God is the material cause

Christian 'creation' is neither out of pre-existing matter

Nor out of God's own substance.

To clearly state the process, Shiva Itself, in the form of

Its Power (Saraswati) goes forth (Prasarati)

To create the illusory world-play (Māya) of subject and object,

which is transcended by yogis, the psychedelics,

saints, and poets.

This creation (Srṣṭi) endures for a while (Sthiti), that is,

according to Hindu reckoning, 8 billion 640 million

years, which is One Day of Shiva.

Then it is engulfed in complete dissolution (Mahapralaya) for  
One Night of Shiva, of equal duration.

Sarasvati, his Sakti, or Energy, has re-entered Shiva

And in Mahapralaya, a new creation is contained, potentially,  
in the unmanifest, undifferentiated Shiva-Sarasvati.

*Continued from page 12*  
The Supreme Sound (Sabda-brahman) as a coming forth (Ullāsa)  
of Shiva has subsided into the eternally existing Calm  
Just as the rising wave breaks, and sinks upon the ocean; or  
a fountain into the waters that feed it; *Tape breaks here*  
Only to rise again when the Divine Desire stirs. *just display e 3*

This awareness of the creation and dissolution of the Universe  
experienced in the yogic or other (psychedelic) expansion  
of the self

In which the cosmic body reveals itself as the throbbing mirror  
of IT, in vibrant shapes and patternings in motion, of  
extraordinary color,

Is the thunderous OM, yes, of modern cosmology. The burning prelude  
was a single searing sun, a dense "primeval atom"

Which exploded and sent all matter rushing outward in the pristine  
sheer symphony.

The speeding galaxies are the gossamer strings and frets and  
fluted belly of her vina, and of the big explosion

...the roaring sound Ham which proceeded from OM, which is Shiva,  
pervading space, time and forms



14  
The roaring sound of the cosmic flash of light, of the burning  
beginning,

Is still with us, transformed to radio waves, first caught on a  
New Jersey hilltop.

Light and radio waves are forms of electromagnetic radiation of  
different frequencies,

The latter, the slowed down whimper of light. Was it like OM. The  
first manifestation of articulate language, the music of  
the spheres, the hum in the sea-shell  
Of the one eternal syllable of which all that exists is but the  
development?

The past, the present, and the future are all included in the  
sound OM

And Shiva, who exists beyond the three forms of time, is also  
implied in it.

OM is the one indestructible sound, the Immensity beyond, which  
is said to contain all rushing language and meaning

Including the first sound of creation, Some think the galaxies  
will go on flying forever

Asserting the principle of the expanding universe.

The greater number

Believe in the pulsating model, the yogi's, the model of the  
heart.

They know mutual pull of gravitation will slow and stop the  
galaxies

And they'll fall down to coalesce again  
Like a round of pebbles thrown up to the Void.

This universe, extruded from Shiva, our astronomers say,  
Is about ten billion years old, and will expand  
For another thirty billion years--the Day of Shiva.

Then, it will stop and plunge for another forty billion years,  
the Night of Shiva, into an incredibly dense mass  
Destroying all galaxies, stars, planets and the life clinging  
to them, in an endlessly self-immolating holocaust.

Congeaing once more, pressures will rise, temperatures soar  
~~billions of degrees~~ billions of degrees  
The entire mass explode once again. And as flaming matter flies  
Galaxies, stars and planets will coalesce into the delicate  
lace of creation,

Bright discs and globes hang on the infinite wand of darkness  
~~Many~~ Non-living atoms and molecules stumble on to the key of self  
-reproduction, ~~to use the language of modern science.~~  
And individual lives begin a new cycle, from the Absolute  
Potential which always exists.

And that is what through introspection and samadhi, the trance  
state, the Indian yogis, become sages, perceived and taught t

GITA SARASVATI

A Theology for Modern Science

The Creation and Dissolution of Kosmos

Tambimuttu



*A Theology for Modern Science*

GITA SARASWATI: *The Creation and Dissolution of*  
 A FILM SCRIPT FOR "SHIVA OF THE THOUSAND AND ONE NAMES"  
 (A THEOLOGY FOR MODERN SCIENCE) *Kosmos (Subtle)*  
 PART ONE: "CREATION AND DISSOLUTION"

In the beginning was God (Prajāpatir vai idaṁ āsit);

And with him was the Word (Tasya vāg dvitiya āsit);

And the Word is God (Vāg vai parama<sup>m</sup> Brahman).

With the cracking glacier sound, with thunder of Time's hooves on  
 the mountain

The timeless sound of the conch-shell is in the intricate ear;

*whispering great*  
 (The ~~great~~ horse of the sacrifice is in the mountain).

With the roaring sound, Ham, so speaks the Word, *Vak*, ~~which is woman~~,  
*which is woman*,

The multifoliate tree of Shiva's Energy / Sarasvati,

Whose every branch, bough and spray is the ancient veneration  
 of our knowledge;

Green and quivering on the mountain top

Half in green leaf and half in flame

Like the tree of the Celtic Mabignogion

— The Welsh Word by the broad river of Time

Pulsing and bright as a shaft of light to the Void, Shiva —

The poetic word, with several overlays of meaning

— Not closely cropped and shaved for discursive or journalistic use —

Colliding with another in the sentence of poetry,  
Colliding, <sup>sounding, detonating</sup> ~~sparkling and bursting out~~, with several outflexions  
of meaning

Which criss-cross and outflex again, creating new words  
Which repeat <sup>this process</sup> ~~the process~~ to infinity, to create the poem.

~~Ideally~~, The poetic word should contain large, agglutinative masses  
of meaning.

<sup>Ideally,</sup> And it would be the whole poem, dancing with <sup>other poems</sup> ~~others~~, to make a  
sentence.

The Word, the Word, Veda, Veda ... the immense word

In which are telescoped all sounds, meanings, forms;  
In the miniscule, the great word of the backdrop in the theatre,  
the mountain, the prairie,  
<sup>and, then,</sup>  
The great Word of the poem and epic, the immense Word of the Universe

....Leaves of grass sum of the books and learning in libraries;  
The seed-word (bīja), the semen of Shiva (bījavan), in Saraswati,  
Is the creator of the Kosmos...

The Word works the turning cog-wheels of the Kosmos,  
The spheres in the heavens  
And the revolving, bright spheres in our minds.



In the beginning was the Word  
And the Word was with God  
And the Word was God  
Was the chanking echo from Kosmos.

The Word is said and the Thing appears.  
It said, in Hebrew, "Let there be Light(Aur)" and there was Light (Aur).  
The Word creates: the thought moulds matter

And the worlds came tumbling in with the tongue of Jazz...

Weaving the Mediterranean Logos of Heraclitus,  
Plato, and the Alexandrian, Philo, who showed the way  
To the deliverer of the Fourth Gospel.

The Word (Yac) was made flesh; but there is a difference in ideas  
Between the "perennial philosophy" (sanāntana dharma), the remnant  
Of a universal store of knowledge, the possession once of all mankind

And Christianity. To dharma (Eternal - Law) God is the material cause  
of the world. It's matter.

To the dualism of the Christian Logos it is not. To dharma, the  
Word is not incarnated in

One historical person, but in all matter and men.



The Word was made flesh, not in one historical place,  
In one particular person, on one particular date.  
It appeared from THAT, which is Shiva, and now appears in the flesh  
and other forms of matter

Of all individual living beings, or Jivas, limited as they are,  
Each of whom, through Veda, the Word, the multifoliate, flowing  
tree of the Scriptures  
May directly become Shiva, whose Sarasvati, the female energy,  
is the Word: Vak;

The Christ figure, alone, walked the earth as God in human form,  
With the remnant of the universal store of knowledge, a crown of  
thorns, a harsh rosary in his hands,  
And the voice of bombed London, the Congo and Vietnam, sent to the  
stakes

Cried with expanding, cosmos-sized words, "What about me?"

The Christ, alone, was ~~known~~ God in human form  
Others were not, are not,  
And ~~never~~ will <sup>never</sup> be.

But Vak, the Word manifests herself in every man  
And is knowable and known as Sarasvati is in herself  
That is Shiva, in that spiritual experience which is the Veda,  
or the Word.

In the beginning was God (Prajāpatir vai idaṁ āsīt);

And with him was the Word (Tasya vāg dvitīya āsīt);

And the Word is God (Vag vai paramaṁ <sup>m</sup>Brahma);

*the*  
So that the sentient rose of flesh, the fiery boulder and mountain,  
all forms of matter, atomic beings (Jivas) 'spotted through' with Life',  
May through the Word become It, Shiva itself, whose creative energy is  
Sarasvati, caressing the vina,

The talking, human lute,

Capable of conversation, of producing all sounds: Who wears the brilliant  
garland of light around her ~~xxx~~ slender neck

Which is the Letters, the Syllables, The Words and Sentences of Speech (Vak).

Sarasvati riding the Wild Goose, the Gander, Ham-sa, that abstract bird of  
light,

Whose very name is the mystic and real symbol of all breathing things:

The natural name of the vital breath, manifested as the expiring (ham),

and the inspiring (sah), of all breathing creatures —

Linked as they are, to the pulsation of the Cosmic Gander, the universe,  
expanding and contracting,

Breathing in and out, as plants do, though on different time scales;

and inert matter breathes also, ringing in the boom of changes.



Saraswati rides the Swan, the Wild Goose, the Hamsah,  
 Which swims on the surface of the water, but is not bound to it.  
 Flying through space, it migrates, north and south, following the seasons.

Divine Essence, Hamsah, free wanderer between <sup>The</sup> celestial and <sup>the</sup> earthly  
~~spheres~~, ~~ambits~~, <sup>spheres</sup>,

Descending on the waters of the earth, taking wing again to the utmost  
~~water~~ on high

You are the divine substance which is embodied in us, and yet unconcerned  
 with us,

We are earth-bound, limited in life strength, in virtues and ~~life~~  
 consciousness,

But as a spark of the divine, which is unlimited, immortal, virtually  
 omniscient and all-powerful,

We are wanderers of the two spheres, like the wild gander.

The macrocosmic gander (hamsa), the Supreme Self in the body of the  
 Universe,

Whose song of inhaling (ham) and exhaling (sah) is the sound the yogi hears  
 when he controls the rhythm of his breath (prāṇāyāma).

Is said to be a manifestation of the "inner gander" which is within us.

Thus, by constantly humming <sup>its own name</sup> ~~it~~, ham-sa, ham-sa in our breath  
 The inner presence reveals itself to the yogi-<sup>initiate</sup> ~~initiate~~...

The song of the "inner gander" has a final secret to disclose:

Ham- sa, Ham-sa it sings, but at the same time, with the syllables reversed,

"So-ham, so-ham," it insists; and since Sa means "this, and Ham "I",  
The lesson is this: "This I am, This I am," <sup>rippling in the infinite lake</sup> ~~throbbing in the music~~ of  
the breath. ✓ ✓ ✓

The individual "I" of ~~the~~ limited faculties, sodden with delusion  
Tight and four-square, hooped like a barrel in the Māyā <sup>or</sup> "Illusion" of  
World-Appearance

Am actually This, He, Self (Ātman), the Highest Self,

Of unlimited consciousness and existence,

"I am He (Paramātmān), who is free and divine."

Every moment of inhalation and exhalation asserts the Supreme Void in whom  
breath abides, "And," sings the glorious bird

"When the sun and moon have disappeared, I float and swim with slow  
movements on

The boundless expanse of the waters. I am the Lord, and I am the Gander."

Sarasvati rides the Hamsa, the breath-spark of <sup>the Universe.</sup> ~~Cosmos~~

Without her there is no Creation. And she proceeds from the

The nothingness, ~~that~~ that is Shiva. (But how can that BE? <sup>be?</sup>)



OMIT

"How can Being be produced from non-Being?" the Indians questioned;  
In the beginning there must have been pure Being, One, and without a  
second,

Through yoga, through introspection, they had become conscious

Of an ultimate void within themselves. "Of a stage beyond thought

and dream,

Beyond <sup>perception and</sup> knowledge, motionless, indescribable, unbounded by space and

time, ~~omnipresent~~ omnipresent.

Was this <sup>void</sup> the causal principle? Was there a motionless substratum for  
matter?

And a substratum for time, as there seemed to be one for thought?  
Were these different substrata, the forms of a still more subtle one,  
the indescribable? Shiva?

<sup>of the Upanishads</sup>  
The Indian philosophers thought deeply before they built a model for  
the universe.

When we try to find the root of any aspect of the created world

We begin to imagine, there must exist beyond its form

Some sort of causal state, some indifferntiated, ~~indivisible~~  
continuum

Of which that particular form is a seeming development.

The first of the continua underlining all perceptible forms appears  
to be space.

Absolute empty space is conceived as a limitless, undifferentiated,  
indivisible continuum

7

In which reside the imaginary divisions of space. The seeming localization  
Of heavenly bodies, and their movements, creates the illusion of a  
division of space.

Similarly, time is indivisible. Absolute time is an ever-present eternity,  
which seems inseparable from space.

Relative time results from the apparent division of space by the rhythm  
of the heavenly bodies.

The third, continuum known to us is thought. Everything exists with a form  
within a coordinated system.

It seems to be the realization of a plan, the materialization of an organized  
dream.

Hence the visible universe was conceived as the form of the thought of its  
creator.

Whenever we go to the root of anything, we find no longer a substance,  
but a mere form, a concept,

Whose nature can be identified with that of thought.

And since ~~the whole~~ the cosmos is a creative process, the manifestation  
of a conscious power,

We are led to search for an active, or conscious, substratum for each of  
the perceptible phenomena,

Which proceed from the goddess Sarasvati from whom is Nature born (*Prakriti*),  
whose substratum is Shiva, whose creative energy she is.



The substratum of space is existence (sat);

The substratum of time is experience or enjoyment (ānanda);

The substratum of thought is consciousness (Cit).

And so sat-cit-ānanda. The Goddess appears at the root of the three aspects  
(guna-s) of existence

As Reality, Consciousness and Experience - in all satchit-ānanda.

As Reality, she is the power of co-ordination, the centripetal "holding"  
tendency visible in the sun.

*pure absolute enjoyment, the innermost nature of existence*  
As Experience ~~or~~ *or* ~~the power of the centrifugal~~, she is the power of the centrifugal  
disintegrating tendency, visible in fire.

As consciousness, she is the power of understanding, the revolving  
tendency visible in the moon.

Creation arises from this triple form of power, of which Shiva's trident is  
the symbol.

*And the creative power*  
*She* ~~She~~ is Saraswati, the goddess of speech, of music and poetry. She is the  
"creation by the Word."

The Word or Sound (S/abda) brings meaning or object (Artha) and Pratyaya  
(Mental Apprehension) to us;

But to normal men, Shiva, in his transcendent, quiescent state

Is soundless (ashabda), is not a meaning or an object (nirvishaya), and  
is beyond our comprehension (pratyaya).

In the transcendental Shiva, therefore, there is  
Neither name (nāma) nor form (rūpa).

In this Infinite Calm of It (Shiva) there arises now a metaphysical  
Point of Stress or Bindu

Which stirs forth (pīrasarati), as the multiple forces of the universe.  
It is through this Bindu, the point limit, where the universal being  
and the individual being unite

The universe is manifested and then withdrawn again at the dissolution.

This movement in Shiva, through Desire, or Love (Kāma), through the  
stress of <sup>the</sup> One wishing to be Many,

The movement through this Lady Saraswati, Saras, or the flowing one,  
is Creation

The universe is the result of the Divine Desire (Kāma) or Will (Icchā).

In the physical world, the Divine Desire (Kāma) is, among other things,  
sexual desire.

In the transcendent, it is the first creative impulse of the One to be  
many.

It begets itself as men, beings, things, the weathers, moods and  
constellations.

Transcendent Love constantly works through individual sex-impulse for the  
continued

Creation of the universe. The Divine Saraswati in Shiva (She as abstract as  
himself) is eternal and the beginning of all things.

And thus spoke Pythagoras of another century: "He divided Eros the first of  
all the Gods".



"Flow" or "Motion" (Saras) is the ascent of her lovely name: Saraswati,  
 White are her garments and transparent whiteness is the color of Ether (Akāśa),  
 and <sup>the cosmic</sup> Cosmic Intellect (buddhi).

The flowing One is "One Who goes pure from the mountain to the sea."

Sacred river, now called the Sarsuti, that falls from the high Himalayas  
<sup>into our changed</sup> ~~into our~~ minds <sup>and</sup> ~~and into our~~ bodies,  
 "Watery and elegant" <sup>the</sup> ~~Or~~ Saraswati <sup>river,</sup> is your name: <sup>flood</sup> ~~river~~ of fertility, your  
 hips-like ripe fruits <sup>your thighs</sup> ~~curved~~ as the sand-banks,  
 You flow in and around the <sup>static</sup> ~~static~~ Ether which <sup>materialized</sup> ~~appeared~~ at <sup>the</sup> Creation

With the roaring sound "Hām", and then stood ~~still~~ <sup>rigid</sup>  
<sup>still, as a static</sup> ~~as a static~~ <sup>framework</sup> of ether <sup>opens</sup>  
 As the ~~static~~ framework on which the whole universe ~~moves~~ and flows  
 As the ~~the~~ World-experience, with its <sup>dualism</sup> ~~duality~~ of subject and object.

This dual play of Saraswati, of subject and object, takes place in the  
~~place~~ in the Ether of Consciousness (Cidākāśa)

In such a way that Consciousness (cit) is neither effaced, or affected,  
 When transcendence of the false <sup>dualism</sup> ~~duality~~ and Immanence with the Primal  
 Cause

Is achieved through the yogic, psychedelic, the saintly, or poetic ecstasy. **END**  
 This is creation (Sṛsti) or, more properly, seeming development (Parīṇāma)  
 Since the English word "Creation," involves an absolutely first appearance,  
 and does not truly describe the process.

It excludes the notion that God is the material cause  
 Christian "creation" is neither out of pre-existing matter  
 Nor out of God's own substance.

To clearly state the process, Shiva Itself, in the form of  
 Its Power (Saraswati) goes forth (Prasarati)  
 To create the illusory world-play (Maya) of subject and object,  
 which is transcended by the yogis, the psychedelics,  
 saints, and poets. 5.00

This creation (Srsti) endures for a while (Sthiti), that is,  
 according to Hindu reckoning, 8 billion 640 million  
 years, which is One Day of Shiva.

Then it is engulfed in complete dissolution (Mahapralaya) for  
 One Night of Shiva, of equal duration.

Saraswati, his Sakti, or Energy, has re-entered Shiva  
 And in Mahapralaya, a new creation is contained, potentially,  
 in the unmanifest, undifferentiated Shiva-Saraswati.

The Supreme Sound (Sabda-brahman) as a coming forth (Ullāsa)  
 of Shiva has subsided into the eternally existing Calm  
 Just as the rising wave breaks, and sinks upon the ocean; or  
 a fountain into the waters that feed it;  
 Only to rise again when the Divine Desire stirs.



This awareness of the creation and dissolution of the Universe  
experienced in the yogic or other (psychedelic) expansion  
of the self

In which the cosmic body reveals itself as the throbbing mirror  
of IT, in vibrant shapes and patternings in motion, of  
extraordinary color,

Is the thunderous OM, yea, of modern cosmology. The burning prelude  
was a single searing sun, a dense "primeval atom"

Which exploded and sent all matter rushing outward in the pristine  
sheer symphony.

The speeding galaxies are the gossamer strings and frets and  
fluted belly of her vina, and of the big explosion

...The roaring sound Ham which proceeded from OM, which is Shiva,  
pervading space, time and forms.

The roaring sound of the cosmic flash of light, of the burning  
beginning,

Is still with us, transformed to radio waves, first caught on a  
New Jersey hilltop.

Light and radio waves are forms of electromagnetic radiation of  
different frequencies,

The latter, the slowed down whimper of light. Was it like OM. The first manifestation of articulate language, the music of the spheres, the hum in the sea-shell  
Of the one eternal syllable of which all that exists is but the development?

The past, the present, and the future are all included in the sound OM

And Shiva, who exists beyond the three forms of time, is also implied in it.

OM is the one indestructible sound, the Immensity beyond, which is said to contain all rushing language and meaning

Including the first sound of creation. Some think the galaxies will go on flying forever

Asserting the ~~principles~~ principle of the expanding universe.

The greater number

Believe in the pulsating model, the yogi's, the model of the heart.

They know mutual pull of gravitation will slow and stop the galaxies

And they'll fall down to coalesce again

Like a round of pebbles thrown up to the Void.



This universe, extruded from Shiva, our astronomers say,  
Is about ten billion years old, and will expand  
For another thirty billion years — the Day of Shiva.

Then, it will stop and plunge for another forty billion years,  
the Night of Shiva, into an incredibly dense mass  
Destroying all galaxies, stars, planets and the life clinging . . .  
to them, in an endlessly self-immolating holocaust.

*para*  
Congealing once more, pressures will rise, temperatures soar  
billions of degrees,

The entire mass explode once again. And as flaming matter flies  
Galaxies, stars and planets will coalesce into the delicate  
lace of creation,

Bright discs and globes hang on the infinite wand of darkness  
Non-living atoms and molecules stumble on to the key to self  
-reproduction, to use the language of modern science.

And individual lives begin a new cycle, from the Absolute  
Potential which always exists.

And that is what through introspection and samadhi, the trance  
state, the Indian yogis, become sages, perceived and taught.

## INDEX

1	Invocation to Luxmi	1	23
2	My Country My Village	24	27
3	Tiffin	6	25
4	Kanda Lake	7	26
5	Map of Ceylon	8	27
6	Atchuvu	9	28
7	Ceylon	10	29
8	Cann	11	30
9	Prayer	11A	
10	Song	12	
11	Reveries	12	
12	Diet	13	
13	The Only Reality	14	
14	Naini tal - for Hari	15	
15	Epitaphic line to Hani and Zehn	18	
16	Villanelle for the Old Men	20	
17	Villanelle	22	
18	Hari py	23	
19	Hekru	24	
20	Closterburg - Ceylon	25	
21			

## Invocation to Luxmi

Where the women droops by the catastrophe  
The sun hangs beads and the traffic flows  
On, She is melting

She the mother of us all, the golden  
Six-handed mother is melting  
Flowing into the sand.

Hold us in your liquid tears  
And let us grow like the bullrush  
Speared to the sky

-- The vast tent. Hung with stars  
Dust, jewels, the splendored gape  
Of the disrobing morning.

The statues on the beach are flesh and blood  
Nerved to their sex  
And changing hours

Weep big eye into the round  
Of the hollow day



The rains will come with the stinging thorn  
And the ninth-month wave  
Hurled to the heart

Of the mud-house. Wet, dry, round  
We shall be washed  
With the morning

And cockburst. Weep Mother into the lake  
Into the pool, the sound, the flowers  
The chaos of hours.

Bind us in the pool of tears  
With the splendored rose  
Of the morning.

Mixed to the roots, the fire, the rain  
The falling dust;

Heavy with your proffered tears  
O make us grow

## My Country, My Village

When I was young, the flame-tree and the jasmine,  
Gilded my youthful eyes with tenderness,  
For natural things — the lotus-pond and the palmyrah:  
The ring dove tore the air with natural passion;  
At Achevely, my Northern home, all else  
Seemed unimportant beside a bassia star.

The carriage eagle atop the rambling lanes  
Wheeled the pastel sky, and a big owl  
Dozed in a tree beside the tethered cow;  
The goat coughed among the pecking hens  
Of which I owned two, three; and morning's haul  
Of egg belonged to me, they said, for supper.

I had a goat too, a cow and Lakshmi,  
Gentle, big-eyed mongrel of a dog;  
And when she died I did not feel like supper —  
And there was Aachi, wrinkled kind old Aachi,  
At six, she told us stories about a frog  
In a well: food slipped down like sweetened milk and guava.



Around our house the mango shoots were pink;  
x The big bassia dropped its blossom like snow,  
The pomegranate spun its exciting wheel  
Against the dropcloth of palm-leaf mink;  
Between the oleander's and trumpet-lily's show  
Pencil of grey arecanut, was wire of steel.

I was four or five, and grandfather, the poet,  
In turban of gold and coat of black was a prince  
Who was kind to us; he flicked the coiled whip,  
And off we went down limestone white roads  
Fringed with lantana eyes; from prints  
He cut us paper dolls, with a clever snip.

Remember evenings in the theatre, his plays  
Like Kalidasa's full of dance and song;  
(My father once taking the leading role,  
Great-uncle Thambar dancing with a pinked face  
Agile as Nijinsky): his poems, a song,  
Stung me to listen, to the metric's whirl.

All this was home, and we were self-contained;  
Our fields provided grain, tobacco, shallots:  
Garlic, pepper, bay-leaves, ginger, saffron:  
Tams, greens, herbs, fruits famed  
For delicacy and flavour. The seas filled with pots,  
And nets, rang in the whole seas kingdom.

This was long ago. And there was home  
Beside the Eastern harbour full of ships,  
And pretty shells on the deserted inner beach,  
Goats-foot underfoot, and a lyric poem  
In the screw-pine smell. The harbour lips  
Enclosed a town beyond the railroad's reach.

There was peace in Trinco jungles too:  
With leopard, deer and buffalo, I roamed  
The jungle paths with Aukie, and my brothers;  
And beyond were the dead cities, the clue  
To ancient hubbub, now be-calmed,  
-All the mighty dead Anuradhapuras.



Colombo, ah Colombo: Excessance of Trade,  
Competition, Endeavour - the pattern did not hold:  
Chaos of many patterns, amorphous,  
- The island's harlot, and Empire's accolade  
In those days; still you were home, a mould  
That shaped me in the Western swirl and rush.

Colombo was home indeed. The silver lights  
Etched the night's dark with favours and delicate ~~shapes~~<sup>shapes</sup>,  
The streets magical by the half-light;  
And when the moon dispelled the grey nights,  
Silver palms stood by elfen capes,  
Proud and feminine in their lissom flight.

All this we loved, my friends, Noel, Rowan,  
Tison, (a young school of friends):  
All this was heaven, until we grew,  
And learnt the dog bit, the moon was ruin,  
The gilt wore off, and all that magic lends  
Is a false perspective, with the chocolate-  
box view



And there was Nuwara Eliya, the new escape  
With a trout stream in the well-kept park;  
Upcot, Haputale, Maskeliya knew few rivals,  
But, alas, the concrete base and rubber crepe  
Brought my village, all villages to mind, from far <sup>dark</sup>  
Self-contained, these knew no rivals.

So on this festive day, with bells and bunting,  
I am wondering whether the hectic pace  
Will give the peace and plenty that we seek;  
Whether the brash plane and limousine affronting  
Shiva in the wooden cart, can grace,  
Or start a new tear, on the ancient cheek.

Whether its better to adorn the top or bottom,  
To increase the village round, and soul's girth,  
Our roundly add to the world's hue and cry,  
-The bazaar's cheating and the traffic's hum  
But this is my island, this my native earth  
That bore me gently from a woman's  
sigh.

Her eye a blackbird among the tumbling bushes,  
Her lashes, the black silk of a deep night,  
Her body the pure long scarf of Laxpana +  
Lights of an ocean liner in her tresses,  
Black tresses, filled with dark and light;  
Cry, O Cry, Nama Nama Mata \*

---

This poem was written for the Third  
Independence Celebrations in Ceylon.

x An Indian tree

+ A waterfall in Ceylon

\* "Glorious to Thy Name O Mother" (Ceylon National  
Song)

---



## Jaffna

Here by toddy roots, the golden Oriole  
Prints yellow tracks across the zig-zag fences;  
The hearts slumbers in the heat, with the lorikeet  
And mind's bereft of all extravagant fancies;  
Her velvet eye in the ancient Walauwa  
Fondles a paper rose with her soft glances.

Home, home, where is it you started?  
Did you grow with the coral under kayts,  
Streak with wild horses on Delft isle  
Flower in the crystal, passionless nights?  
Lone by strange Fort Hammanhiel  
Unravel the world's wrongs and rights?

From northermost Point Pedro, the spanking  
North Easter encircles Jaffna's tulips —  
Dusky tulip-trees of the maiden  
To many their childhood toy and julep!  
Remember the fruit that were the play tops  
Underneath the old school-house's burlap?



Flat as a tabletop, the landscape:  
Gothic cathedrals of palmyras, doves  
Salt estuaries with heron and flamingo  
And pensive stork, the memory endorses;  
All this Jaffney, and more, you are to those,  
Sprung in your red earth and bird filled groves

### Kandy Lake

Its peaceful here by the constructed lake.  
Buildings sit on the waters, and ripples break  
On an ornamental wall covered with triangles.  
Which declares it Kandyan. Jingles of  
Of fussy trees makes a bright border  
And the stentorian cabbage-palm roots the disorder,  
Cassin's candelabra hang yellow, and the rain tree  
Thrusts its coral whiskers at the powder blue sky  
The garden at the southern end is a persian carpet.  
Rare like cobra's diamond, and famous as a song-hit.  
I envy these nut brown children tumbling down the red road,  
Their school must be near heaven, on the sloping hill's side.  
Slender as the lake's reed, and tense like the sun's heat,

This is the elfin Kingdom they inherit  
They say sleep-eyed princesses once dreamed on that <sup>island,</sup>  
And also a mother drowned there, quite out of mind,  
Dark and light, the waters, their ancient secrets  
Surface moves and ripples on the edge of sleep <sup>keep,</sup>.

### A Map of Ceylon

This is a map of Ceylon to take with you,  
Wherever you go, and near to your heart;  
Wherever wells have dried, and wishes no longer  
Chime with the clear beat;  
Each raiding change makes day colder,  
Each new departure, bring you where you started.

We begin at first with the hard growth of pathos,  
- Cockspar Thorn on the barren heath;  
Where the rock breaks, the Tiger's Claw  
Offers cabragoya useless fruit;  
Moon-pleins they are called; Love's grass  
With dry lichens and moss is lost.



And then the sudden fury of the rains  
Lashed the hot eyes among the blue hills  
The rivers were in spate and the hills' eyes -  
Ramboda, Laxapana - with butterflies was full;  
Dropped down into the Ganga's throat  
To feed the salt birds and the shore's gulls.

Ceylon is always the map, on your palm, look!  
Burnt with the sun's needles and action's desiring;  
That one, now is the Mount of Adam  
And this, the river, named the Great One;  
Beyond the lines of luck and ill-luck, conspiring,  
These are the things, in the end, that will bring you  
home.

Atchuvvely

For my Grandfather

Here the silver head dreamed of the hoopoe  
In a perfect sonnet for his darling's praise  
In her lemon arms thrust the jujube and mango,  
The shires plant, and ancestral grace;



Plucked her the magic islands of the West,  
Kagts, Hammenhiel, all those places  
Long disappeared now, in the sun's depths  
Where starfish with the turtle races.

Clattered the passionate stars over Archurely,  
His heart beat faster in each sheer song:  
The thrush entered his heart, with the shimmering  
hewn tree.

And now he's gone the tines his secret keep  
His mood beat down, shadowy and strong,  
And in the bassia grove the orioles weep.

### Ceylon

When Sofia dreams under the palm thatch  
Her golden arms cool as water-melons,  
The palms shoot off their choros to the burnished  
And moonbeams are extravagant with their  
bright shillings,  
Heart of the grass and scent of the twisted  
vine  
Have made her beautiful, and the water slips  
over stones,  
The ferns have glow-worms in their hair,  
And the moss grows over the trees bones,  
Delicate within her eyes grow the wild flowers,  
Weaves the dreaming island out of magic  
and fragile tines.

## Canna

There was a day when you were in love,  
And the canna heads came tumbling down;  
There was a day when the tempestuous heart  
Was a riot of colour in the drab town;  
And as they vanished, bright colours fading,  
Those trellised eyes faded and drowned.

Like rich cloths, and hair fading  
And ocean liner over the sky line,  
Days, hands, lips vanished;  
There was nothing there that was mine  
The canna grew again in the same bed  
Dear flesh beautiful as wine.

So fill the gardens with the tumble of canna  
Ring in the tinted heads, by the gold coast,  
— Straight assegai of the passionate garden,  
Intricate growth of the heart's thirst;  
The fulfilment and the resurrection  
Of the unlucky, and the lost.

---



## Prayer

Let me taste the silence that flows  
Behind your dark eyes, O Nirvana<sup>+</sup>  
The bird is heavy on the hill  
And the silence fills

Its black vessels of sound,  
The ladder is broken to your rooms  
And two hands are flowers  
Falling, falling

With the beat of the sea.  
Crush the petals on the dust  
And pitch the blood  
On the running wind.

On the running sand.  
The world is vast  
And you are watching, watching  
Through the split in the leaves—

Drown my soul, drown  
Down into the night without desire—  
Where the reflections are no more, no more  
And rooms are broken into vast spaces.

+ Buddhist's heaven



## Song

In your eyes the waters flow  
The curls of the river;  
Where the silent pump heaves water  
To the well-heads.

Well-head and bull-dance  
And the mix of petals  
Are your eyes to me  
- The mirror of my delight.

Scatter the roses to the wind  
And let the loud room sing  
Sing; Of your delight, my delight  
The well-head of them all.

## Reveal Her

Reveal her, raze her flat to the ground  
The white kernal rigid to the teeth.  
And the airs of heaven drift into the hole  
The hole of heaven

Heaven is in our faces, blowing  
With the slip and drift of water.

Doll on the smooth stone.

Eaten with passion.

Heaven is where the colours cross  
And the waters meet

Drift, drift into the water  
Where the roses mix.

The swallow tumbles into the pool  
And the willows kiss

Heaven is where the angles mix wink  
And teeth are entered strongly.

### Diety

Mysterious, ayoha, ayoha,  
Without lips hearts or membranes

On the high mountain tops:

Eating your passion smoothly

Like oil, nuts, grapes, oranges,

The heart is a gape the breezes enter



With the running water and the beat of tides  
On barren shore, the widening

Burning stair of white sand to somewhere.  
Fill the valleys with song and smother  
The hearts, lakes, stars, with diamonds  
— Old is your sacred song.

---

### The Only Reality

The holy loves that flower in the dark  
Subside into the wet jewels of night  
Quietly and without much fuss.

The trains come and go like visitors  
To an open house all day,  
With great commotion.

The bustle in our hooded hearts  
The splitting of the city, and the vibration  
Are parallel and the same.

The quiet pool lies where roads bend  
The suns flow  
And the rooms are entered.

Nainital

For Hari on his thirty-fourth birthday

None of us can escape magic; from time to time  
 The forest opens into a clear lake  
 With boats and youths, and the heart opens  
 Into a single flower, the girl can pluck.  
 Here at Naini Tal where I have found peace  
 On the swimmer's breast, and the lit room of her eyes,  
 I have found this, that suddenly the mist lifts,  
 And the lake stretches intricate in the hills' maze.

A little love from time to time breaks through  
 The rough, furry bud, and the thick jungle;  
 Plummeting birds take the leafy citadel,  
 And honey bees with the thunderous flowers mingle;  
 The whorled orchid asserts the wonderful,  
 Harries the heart that's been difficult and single:  
 Drip-drops all feeling, colours, scents  
 Into a bright cup that's now full.

To get here and to claim Naini Tal  
 As you would take a child to your breast,



To find the route that's both direct and certain  
The Great Northern Road to the peaceful becks and fells  
A simple remedy for our fears and ills.

Remember meeting Caliban in Regent's Park  
One summer evening Kamala was the goal;  
The tortured face of the actor, and his rough clothes,  
The servant-monster of a dark time;  
Earth-spirit with the dark yearning voice,  
Born of the split rock, and split wine.

The spectral homes that Stewart survived  
From his colourful India to his stark London  
The revolving doors of "The Wheatsheaf" that let in  
The weak and the ponderous, or the steadily wasting;  
All those that Caliban blessed, who in his torment  
Told us he woke only to cry, and to dream again

Those were times we can never forget,  
When the Casino's girls were 'lovelies', like an angel;  
When the drum of "The Caribbean" stirred the beautiful ~~dark~~  
And London's snow was a beating white gull;

Against the drop-cloth of lit-up Piccadilly,  
Fell the weariness and beauty in handbills

That was the old magic that gilded  
The war-torn faces and the tumbled brick;  
When we celebrated a wedding, or your birthday,  
With a placemat, a curry and a flick.  
Out growing those we looked on brand new officers  
And wondered which over-vellous button would be the trick

That was the eager, vacation age when tumbling  
In the hay, or starting a fire was delicious,  
When children rolled in the thinking room,  
And youthful laughter burst in rosettes and stars;  
Shot the midnight with sparkling lips and spangles  
Along the moon's cap on the plane's burr.

Then the laughter tarnished and photos faded,  
With the smut picnics and woodland rumbles,  
And the slick statement locked heart,  
And a Celt's sudden passion seemed important,  
Rent with the blood's heat and brambles  
It made us pause, and have our doubt



When to the sessions of sweet silent thought  
I summon up remembrance of things past,  
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,  
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste;

Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,  
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,  
And weep afresh love's long since-cancell'd woe,  
And moan the expense of many a vanish'd sight.

Then can I grieve at grievances forgone,  
And hearily from woe to woe tell o'er  
The sad account of fore-bemoan'd moan  
Which I new pay as if not paid before :

-But if the while I think on thee, dear Friend,  
All losses are restored and sorrows end.

W. Shakespeare

Contents

- 1) Invocation to Luxmi
- 2) My Country, my Village
- 3) Jaffna
- 4) - Kandy Lake
- 5) A Map of Ceylon
- 6) Atchuvethy
- 7) - Ceylon
- 8) Cannon
- 9) Prayer
- 10) Song
- 11) Reveal Her
- 12) The Only Reality
- 13) Deity
- 14) Reveal Her
- 15) Colombo Harbour
- 16) Manipay
- 17) Polonnaruwa
- 18) Hidden place
- 19) Chosen burb, Ceylon
- 20)
- 21)
- 22)
- 23)
- 24)
- 25)



So on his thirty-fourth birth at Nain Tal  
Among the sorrowful hills and delicate willows,  
I hope a sudden light and the new beginning  
will surprise you.

Cover your darling's hair and bright eyes with kisses,  
On the rippling broad lake the silver yachts float,  
So may you trim and launch your dream boats.

x William Langer read

x Dylan Thomas.

---

Epitaphic Lines To Harold and Zohar

Now, at last, the splendid rain is falling  
And the hungry earth is spelted with kissing  
The bird of sleep has fallen on her eye  
With the rain breast and darker wings;  
Kind he, no longer, has his rambling wishes  
The joining rain has settled in his eye.

Oh bless this summer of this sopting country  
And praise the marriage of huckle, corn and ferns

In every well there is a reflection,  
In every tangled heart, a shaft for entry;  
Now you have proved it dear, dear, my nation's kern;  
In time, to imitate your perfection.

Tender face of the wife, Zafra,  
Sliver sitara, chiming with bird and sundew,  
For your black hair is yet scented the waterfall,  
Steal the butterfly sunlight from the branches;  
Your sun-baked body, my dear, is India,  
For your new love I wish you as fierce a hunger

Now as monsoon drops on tape and cottage path  
And strange new shafts of light carve a new world here,  
Loves hammer rings on the mountain head;  
There is glory in each bird-breast.

I send you my wishes and my praise,  
For only dreaming and the love, is actual

---



Villanelle for the Old Year.

The old year's dying on our native hills,  
Remember you Gosh night at the Golden Fills?  
It is the memory, the memory remains and kills,  
The memory fails and the passions chill,  
And a new year better now someone has gone,  
The old year's dying on our native hills.

Pictures are fading, the worn heart kills  
Now the old days have swiftly flown;  
It is the memory, the memory remains and kills.  
It is the crowded story that stills  
The bowed head and the cringing down,  
The old year's dying on our native hills.

The years memories sing in silver hills  
Over the mind's quiet secluded lawns;  
It is the memory, the memory remains and kills,  
And grateful too for the happy times, the thrills,  
The weather, the loving and the corn;  
The old year's dying on our native hills  
It is the memory, the memory remains and kills.

## Colombo Harbour

Falls the darkness on this patch of water  
With a roar of winches and the engines drumming.  
People setting out for far places  
Come here to roast, and faster  
The engines hum, and with their grunting  
To born a new sea laughter.

The bin boats have carried a man's dreams  
For thirty years on this oily water,  
The spider's mesh got caught in his hair,  
His eyes laced with ~~shipping~~ rigging and ship-boards,  
With life's eternal compromise and barter  
In 900 BC he was still our harbour

And so they back and sail and go away  
Or drawn from this spot, that is the world and ours  
And when eyes dream of other islands -  
Lay your sleeping head here and stay  
Awake; think Colombo's harbour's  
Our own, with sand and silence



Kortebom on the hill was a childhood symbol  
Of deep sea ships and men, the flying fish;

Tonight her strong lights reminds the voyagers  
Of home, the eyes that were brown and simple

The drumming ships float in the harbor dish

A thousand ~~ships~~ fingers comb the pulsed trees.

### Villanelle

We won't find peace in the language of war  
Jawahar Lal Nehru

We won't find peace in the language of war,

I have seen homes on fire like gose;

We live today under an evil star.

September! Thirty nine heard the passions roar,

Friends faded and passed with the autumn rose,

We won't find peace in the language of war

They dropped down dead in the crowded bar

The bomb's flares message was sure and terse,

We won't find peace in the language of war.

All was in flame, blood, fire and fear  
And knows know what death means.  
We live today under an evil star.

Dunkirk, Warsaw, Arras, brave Helms  
Remember all this and more.

We won't find peace in the language of war  
We live today under an evil star.

### Manipal

To many Manipal is but a name  
Where their ancestors filled and brought to  
Where old houses with broad verandas  
Multiplied the families of great worth  
Where they studied Manipalpurushottam  
To praise the antecedents of ~~each~~ <sup>each</sup> ~~ancestor~~ <sup>ancestor</sup>

Cultivated, conservative, progressive,  
Beyond their time and condition:

The scholar Gnanaprasad, the Mathur,  
The greatness of Comaradwan at Boston,  
Rameswathar, Arunachalam, the statesman,  
Emigrants to Bologna, France or London.



Something precious was born in Manipay  
Behind the stone walls and thatch fences  
Bold as sparrows, bright eyed as robins  
Whole and undivided, their fancies;  
They found order under the mind's  
Precise and glittering lenses

So let us go down to antique Manipay  
The spring of so much good endeavour;  
Where the peacock flower was all flame and golden  
And there were peacocks once in that shady bower  
Where silk rustled, and bejewelled hands  
Blessed you and stole you for ever.

---

### Nehru

You Eastern, sir, among the world's leaders,  
With Churchill, a master of the English tongue,  
Your words precise as apples and lush as cedars,  
In your Colimases of World History, and  
In pure style, with Churchill, Burke, Disraeli, Gibbon,

Teach the world's leaders to choose their words  
Carefully,

"Fore-sight" is not "Apprehension," or "Strength," the  
Bent.

"Indecision" is not "Rejection," as you say, Sir,  
Common wealth the goal, not only of England,  
But America, England, all things that we born.

Teach us to choose right in this terrible moment,  
Lover of Peace, brave voice of Torment.

### Cloisemburg, Caylon

A bit further down, its land's end;  
Here on the lapping, curving beach of Gullie,  
Leaping whitefish and seaweed southwards,  
Hung a trader and marauder like a gull  
Satisfied for a while on this rocky escarpment,  
Grabbing for spices, ivory and jewels.

The humbler traffic of the beach, the rock-crabs  
Like spiders, starfish, and the stranded jelly:



Shells like bassia flowers and melon seeds,  
And stranger tints on the conch's belly  
Flaunt as bright a bazaar for the bathers;  
The tepid sea's an acid-green like netli.

The viridian palms frame caste castellated Clonsburg-  
The seasalt dream of a fierce old sea captain;  
The ding-dong breeze tears through enormous windows  
To a timbered hall lined with coral and gypsum.  
Sheer drop of rockface to the white-lace water  
Is a rug, squat Clonsburg is wrapped in.

On the sea's apple, far off a buggadee  
Is a faint smudge on the horizon's line.  
The mind's lake ripples with yachts and  
silver ships,  
And the heart wishes the round world were  
mine,  
To toss to you across the apple water,  
Mix your darling, shy, wide eyes with mine.

---

# SINHALESE LOVE SONGS

BY

TAMBIMUTTU

YOU CAME TO ME.....

You came to me with your red hibiscus lips and the  
saffron moonstain congealed upon your brow like  
water gleaming in the nelun blossoms.  
you breathed on me with the full-blown pinesmell in  
in your prescence and the soft-voluptuous mingling  
of the sungrain in the heavens when the papaw-  
leaves are drooping big-eyed in the crackling  
noonday heat  
you brust on me like a golden cassia shower of big-  
lipped innocence shaking a store of yellow-gleaming  
sovereigns into the quiet pool of the limpid  
evening dusk  
and you spoke to me beloved in the mysterious voice  
of pulsing sandalwood and softly breaking jasmine  
buds.  
the stark-nakedness of full-fleshed lonely mountains  
and the wide open spaces with the stars swinging over  
them  
for you were my ambalam\* in the desert ways when ~~the~~  
the fire of youth had died withen me ~~and~~ like a  
snuffed-up candle flame in the breathing dark and  
left me a wisp of cotton-nothingness in the  
racing squat tempest of life  
and you took me to you beloved from the mud in which  
i was born; wiped the rough tears from my eyes  
with ~~with~~-your lotus fingers  
and gave thid ragged and vagrant soul the little  
happiness for which it had always longed  
with a dumb-eloquent look  
in its animal eyes

—my poor  
eyes



I DID NOT KNOW.....

i did not know that the remembrance of your eyes  
was the sorrow of the ninth-month floods and the  
fury of the monsoon tempests when they batter the  
mud-and-bamboo homesteads down  
else i would never have attempted this wilderness  
alone and forsaken your warm bosom for this  
grim mockery of an ambalam\*that is happy with  
sorrow-falls and bright with curling darkness  
i grabbed a crackling sun within my spurting fingers  
and found that i had sought the wreckage of a  
faded sunflower in my youthful impulsive pursuit  
for escape  
for the having of you was also a juggernaut sorrow  
too heavy for my fleshed-and-blooded nakedness  
to endure with fortitude and manly undauntedness  
that's why i sought an odour when the blossom was  
in my hand a twining glamorous prescence forever  
that's why i'm pining away in this lone-loneliness  
and regretting i ever left you my  
Nunni!

YOU ARE DELICATE LIKE A PINK COWRIE.....

you are delicate like a pink cowrie that the flower  
hands of the ocean have deposited on the soft-sanded  
shore  
and i am afraid to touch you with my passion lest you  
crumple like an earthenware pitcher under the wheels  
of the juggernaut in which our Lord is carried in  
state when he visits the dim bazaar  
so let me hold you in my hand my Nunni like a glistening  
heap of rosy pomagranate that i am reluctant to eat  
because they are so very beautiful to look at  
and let me twine around you like the broad emerald  
flame of a giant creeper that clings in a delirium  
of happiness to the brown bosom of a lofty tree in  
the jungle  
for i want to have you Nunni, gently, delicately in my  
blood like the fragrant spices that breathe impal-  
pably in the Moorman's muscat and his sherbet wine  
and i want to breathe and throb and thrill and live  
and die with you in a perfect oneness-loneliness  
for you are the dark oil within the bowl and i the wick  
and how shall i ever burn without you?



(4)

CAN YOU HEAR MY HEART BEATING AT YOUR WINDOW?.....

can you hear my heart beating at your window Nunni?  
you say it is only the monsoon rain  
~~did~~ you not know i was the wind and the clouds and  
the clouds and the beetle-black darkness  
before i was born?

can you not hear the murmur of the molten water  
slipping among the peacock reeds my Nunni?  
do not tell me it is only the stream  
for i was a sunkist stream in the mountains before  
you were born and  
and i know it is my love that is deep

can you not feel my lips on your lotus feet my Nunni?  
i was also the dew in the grass  
and when you sleep among the hot-mingling grain and  
and the ~~sunspurts~~ ~~sunspurt~~ sun-spurts  
remember you are resting on my heart

I WILL BUILD A BUNGALOW FOR YOU.....

i will build a bungalow for you just as the white men  
 have upon the edge of the intimate-sprawling sea  
 with a flame-coloured verandah pressed with close-  
 cropped railings milky as the jasmin moon  
 and the exulting wind from the ocean shall curl throu-  
 gh thy sun-kist hair like love  
 and we'll sit together two clasping pools of sun-  
 shine on the lake, with our hearts excitedly  
 young-lipped-whispering  
 and you will bud and flower in my brimming hand like  
 sparkling water in the lonely jungle places  
 and i will drink of your daybreak-simple beauty in  
 the restless heaving sunshine.....

.....  
 ah Nunni, why must you live away from me?  
 and why must i be alone?



REPOSEFUL COW-BELLS.....

reposeful cow-bells are tinkling like silver stars  
where the soft-folded ground is a quietness of  
spurting grass  
and a violet ring-dove in the brave-fingered palmyra  
quoodles of the yearning that is born in things of  
the earth for each other, as the lips of the sunset  
stain the hills and the sea  
so steal into my heart my Nunni with the surge of the  
hunch that the Holy Brahman is blowing to our many-  
handed god in the darkness of the temple  
steal like the brave-timid wind stealing into the  
warm bosom of the jasmine beds or a secret snake  
into the slime-soft darkness of a soft-fleshed  
mystery .....  
.....  
Nunni!  
ah my Nunni!

W.HEN THE W ANDERING CLOUDS .....

when the wandering clouds or night have pitched  
have pitched their grey tents in the stark wastes of the sky

come into the tent of my heart beloved  
for then am i tired with my toil

and if on a dark night you shall discover  
a lonely rose heavy-lidded and sleepy with dew

remember it is my tired heart  
weeping for you  
in darkness

\*\*\*\*\*

(8)

BE TO ME AS THE SUN IS TO THE SKY.....

be to me as the sun is to the sky while the crumpled  
hours are withering like blossoms  
spring in me as an eternal spring unbudding a swirl  
of light and laughter in a silver shining rose  
besmy light when the rolling cogs of darkness pass  
silently over the face of the earth  
abide with me like the firm rock in the forest and  
the undying whisper hovering on ~~Laxapana~~\* like a  
molten eternal palm frond in the air  
speak to me with the voice of the streamside willows  
and the murmur of platinum moonlight spattering the  
passionate rice-fields  
and hold me fast beloved in the fastness of thy loneli-  
ness ~~✱~~  
a joy removed from the breeding of the earth

hold fast  
fast



YOU LOOKED AT ME WITH YOUR EYES LIKE FULL-BLOWN LOTUS

ES.....

you looked at me with your eyes like full-blown lotus-  
es and smash-entered my soul/ that was hard as  
seasoned satinwood

and my soul was a fragrant heap of lemanthemum bloss-  
oms delicate-fleshed-voluptuous in their naked  
moonstone milkiness

i flowered and heaved within me in bank upon bank of  
vernal floweriness wet-leaved and after-shower-  
flesh-exotic smelling like a bursting cloud of  
crimson lantana inflorescences

and i did not know where to hide my flaming passion  
too mighty for the dagaba\* of the earth to enshrine  
it in its brick-and-mortar-passionless bowels and  
without light and without bursting warmth to hold  
it isolated in seclusion

and i climbed up to the barreh mountains and crucified  
my fruitfulness upon its heights and my wail went up  
to the sorrowing sky

and the tear drops that were shed from the heavy ~~li~~-  
lidded eye of the heavens

are/ the showy lemanthemum ~~on~~ the kandy streams,  
the blood-blot lantana in the Vanni and all the  
blood-and- milk-warm-passionate blossoms of  
of the world

(10)

EVEN THOUGH YOU MUST BE GOING AWAY.....

even though you must be going away from me to a place  
where the fogs are like the leaves in the jungle  
and the sun but seldom shines  
Nunni~~y~~ you will come to me by and by ~~and~~  
and i will come to you

you will come to me like a quiet breeze in the evening  
when i'm tired and very old  
when my hair is white like water-lilies on the stream  
and my eyes are dimmed and gone

and i will take you in my old tired arms  
and forget you ever went  
for even though you will live for many weary harvests  
in the white-mans teeming cities  
your heart will remain for ever  
with me

COME TO ME WHEN THE CANNA SUN.....

come to me when the canna sun is reeling drunkenly  
on the edge of the high-terraced rice fields and  
the crimson water is clotting in thin sinous  
streaks among the passionate hills.

come to me when the song of the breeze is eddying  
sensually through the filagree neem in delicate  
cascades of soft sound and the spiny brittle  
stars are pricking out of heaven

steal to me away from the huts of your tribe and  
the eager fields of your ~~tribe~~- koeralay\* to  
the stark loneliness of my desert home.

for i want to hold you naked and palpating on my  
bed beloved, a wild eyed child, slender as a  
leopard and noble as the hills of your blossom-  
smeared Kandyan home



YOUR FACE WAS GOLDEN LIKE THE TEA-BLOSSOM.....

your face was golden like the tea-blossom my Nunni  
that moon-burned night we lay beside the canna  
bed behind the white-man's stately park  
and we whispered our first love to each other very  
softly like two winds straying into a corn-field  
hand in hand and shaking the rice-ear-anklets  
to a honey sweet estescy  
and when i felt your wet lips cling to mine with  
the dense passion that is born of holy love, i  
looked up to see your baby face that was golden  
as the tea-blossom  
and all i saw was a ridge of moonlight on a myste-  
rious waste of darkness with two still-watered  
pokunas that were your beautiful eyes  
and now that you are absent from my arms and the  
golden moon is resting on the palm-leaf like a  
bright veined rose-petal on quiet unglowing  
water  
my heart is cracking like a dried-up stick beneath  
the weight of this loneliness too lonesome to  
bear because it is the loneliness beloved  
for you

## THE SMOKY-LEAVED CASUARINA.....

the smoky-leaved casuarina spreads its thin smudge  
like a cloudy veil against the warm breast of the  
sky

and i am flowing an inchoate mass of blue darkness  
into the broad folds of the evening that is spread  
in the spacious air like the muslin-vague odour  
of vegetation in a fast-budded lonely jungle

i am losing myself in the vague tumble of lily stars  
and the unobtrusive smilax in the grass with its  
humble odorous flowers little as sesamum seeds  
but the remembrance of you is a grim-sweating cable  
of ten-twist hemp that hails me back to myself with  
the cruel realization of this unwearable lone-  
loneliness

so i stand and pray coiled within the vast hall of my  
lonely deserted heart i was lost forever in the  
close-fetted removedness of a pulsing lily star  
of a passionate smilax bud

and i wish i could burn my shadow from my feet for you  
are my eternal shadow and my shadow is sadness-  
eternal sadness because you were joy transcendent,  
in the scarce-away days, not very long ago

# Lambimuttu

TWO-TWENTYSEVEN WEST ELEVENTH STREET  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10014

*Poems 1936*



~~1935~~ 36  
1935-36



~~CHALSON~~ SONG

a tale has an ending

my tale

has no beginning

i felt

a song undone within

when we first met

there was no beginning

it will not end

BALI AND MAYA NOW DANCE.

O Natarajah

Noblest, <sup>AND</sup> ~~THE~~ grandest conception of Man  
FUSING INTO ONE  
< Science, religion and art ~~to one~~  
YOU ARE the  
< Key to the complex fabric of life  
~~to~~ Not <sup>to</sup> one faction or country

Or one Century  
YOU ARE  
< Universal in your meaning

To philosopher, lover and artist

Throughout all <sup>of</sup> Time

Apex of all those artists

Who have strived

In remote island, desert or lonely garret

To mold, limn, utter, utter

Their intuition of life

In these days of ~~the~~ thought in pigeonholes, compartments

The synthesis of all thought

INEVITABLE

REAL

Your profound cosmic rhythm

Earth sound

Sound of interstellar spaces

Not dogma, <sup>or</sup> ~~not~~ superstition

The syncretism

Of the facts that are evident

You are the Supreme Energy

Science ~~that~~ defines

Behind all phenomena

No artist of today, however great

N U A N C E

day broke  
on the hills  
i awoke  
and sighed

the day laughed  
through the glade  
i remembered  
and cried

the day  
was a flame  
in the brush  
but within me  
was

only  
a name

a name



VIGNETTE

iron-rails and coach-wagons  
in the murky station

deserted platforms  
and the lonely  
porter  
smoking a cigar

three red lights  
are glowing  
in the distance

i have missed my train  
to Colombo

## REMEMBRANCE

Wisps  
of remembrance  
crisp  
whorls  
swirling  
and hovering  
importunate  
at the doorstep  
Fricasee  
of friable crockery  
and cracknel crumples  
brittle to the  
mind's feeble antennae  
and the urgent breath  
Then....  
drifts  
curled and involuted  
tenuous  
whirled whistling  
and the stir  
of muslin  
softly soughing at your casements  
responsive to dimly familiar impacts  
Vague contact  
of the mind with old landmarks  
Luxurious waddle  
in the puddles  
of ancient scrub and stone and stubble  
Relaxation  
lapse of blood and muscle to lazy  
masturbation  
and then  
the squealing in the blast  
and onslaught  
of a baboon horde  
Lurch and roil and limbo  
the brake  
grates  
Shudder

~~WOODCUT~~ LANDSCAPE

metallic palm-trees  
are jangling  
in the breeze

fat nutty bells  
are dangling  
like a hundred  
breasts

but  
the patient  
grass  
is creeping on  
and on



E P I S O D E

a cluster of city lights  
huddling in the darkness  
a wild constellation  
of frightened eyes

i am cranking my bike  
with merry feet.  
grinding a happiness  
from grating cogs  
and rattling ball-bearings

slipping to oblivion  
to my love  
a hundred miles away

NUDE

dirty pavements  
with coolies

joss-sticks smoking  
in the dim bazaar

and the pingo-man  
in a sarong

rolling            life  
                  grinning at the mouth  
happy in the mud

that's where life is rolling  
like a broad stream

                  stream  
the mighty

                  torrent  
where i belong

and

this life

M O T I F

i am the life  
and the awakening  
of the earth

but the earth  
does not want  
life  
or  
awakening

The earth  
is a dead  
rat  
hanging  
by a  
pole



S O L I L O Q U Y

lean willows  
are sprouting by the stream  
in merry hordes

the dark water  
is the sad tale  
of a lover

but  
my tear-drop  
is an ocean

no willows  
have i  
to comfort  
me

#### WOMAN

Incursion into India of the ukelele  
land of the lotus and filagree temples  
heavy with filoselle and figurines  
four-stringed Maori toad  
but it cheered me by the whistling stream  
strafed, strafed  
quashed Stradivarius by the whistling stream

Incursion into me of you  
was there a need  
a necessity?  
I do not know  
but you were also beauty  
I carved a niche for you

#### REVELATION

Tears, sausage tears, dumbly dropping like apples  
more eloquent than cabbages

#### ESCAPE

*A square ball rolled on the ground*

WORDS

words

baste them in honey

i will discover them

brazen words

braised to tenderness

i will not swallow

without irritation

that's why

i am

an enemy of men

other men

understand

only by

words



CAVATINA

i dreamed

in the lap of the wind.

and broke of the bread of despair

shimmering wheels are grinding in the dark

a sad story

I D Y L L

lone grass

lost

and alone

you have wandered far

in this wilderness

of rock

and arid stone

golden haulms

caressing the warm earth

you lie

flesh to flesh

blood to blood

drunk with the warm flesh

of the humid earth

you have come far

seeking

i have a long journey

to go

yet

to the solitude  
the silence  
and the loss  
in loneliness

where the stars are  
and the plains  
and the burning sand

where i will find  
my love again  
reborn  
of a foetus  
of loneliness

for i am solitude  
vanished from men  
and sand  
in the ~~social~~ wheels

so let me go  
drifting  
to the wilderness

to find my love  
~~as you have~~  
lone.

~~Grass~~



REVEILLE

awake

beloved

for the sky is heavy with the sun  
and fields are drowsy with light

goodbye

take all my love

with you

and leave me

with loneliness

and this longing for you

this craving for you

you are the beating in my blood

so

you will always be with me

goodbye my life

and yet i will always live

within a memory

for you are life

C H I A R O S C U R O

love

you are hope

in my despair

but i remember

hopes

are

abstractions

love

you are laughter

in the mid-house

but ~~i~~-sigh

i sigh

and remember

laughter

has

tears

you are a dream  
that must pass away  
with a night

for with the dawn  
has dawned the world  
and i am worthlessness

so leave me happiness  
for ever  
i shall never need thee again

for

~~iam~~  
i am but a life  
within a memory



FLOUNDER

My heart  
stumbled  
I met me  
as you ambled by  
I fumbled  
for the jumbled fumaroles  
of my heart  
I floundered and let  
a fulsome heat  
beat  
on a white lily  
Fiasco  
Forget  
a fool and his money

## MUTABILITY

Behold the caterpillar crawl today,  
Amoeba-like, a blotch of sombre grey.  
Tomorrow, see him draped in red and gold,  
Inflame each ferny bank and withy wold.  
Behold the white-ant flit today on wings  
Of gauzy fineness - most hyaline of things  
But see the morn hath left him wingless, shorn,  
He's but a worm, a crawling worm forlorn.  
Thus must this worldly windmill run its course,  
The rich be crushed, penury find a close;  
Thus must the proud detruded crawl and groan,  
The low exalted reap the good they've sown.

I N V O C A T I O N

window-bars

straight and orderly

spilling sunlight and whisperings

bar my eyes

my ears

and my senses

my soul is

a troubled flame

in the gust of

young desire

window-bars

straight and orderly

bar my eyes

my ears

and my senses



9th July 33

THORNS

Sharp thorns are women and they bleed  
Our feet and hearts together.  
The blood they draw is sacred meed  
That holds us fast in tether.

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

A light there was that shined,  
A beacon far away,  
That stood at Heaven's Gate  
And burnt for man its ray.  
But man, alas, took water  
And poured in sinful play  
And smoking, smoking, smoking  
Its left unto this day.

THE MAGIC TOUCH

A voice I had forgotten murmured  
From the distant mists.  
The song I had forgotten echoed - echoed - echoed,  
And the chord that I remembered  
Trilled again in its fullness,  
- And my heart ~~was~~ awoke to the memories of a yesterday.

R E V E R I E

memories  
of happiness  
with you  
make me feel  
a god  
on earth

x x x x

i close ~~my-eyes~~  
my eyes  
and remember  
the roof broke  
on Samson

B A L L A D

i must go

for

i

love you

i must go

for

i

am

sorrow

i go

the world will build

on my heart



E P I S O D E

a cluster of city lights  
huddling in the darkness  
a wild constellation  
of frightened eyes

i am cranking my bike  
with merry feet  
grinding a happiness  
from grating cogs  
and rattling ball-bearings

slipping to oblivion  
to my love  
a hundred miles away

NIGHT - P I E C E

a voice

in the dark

the sky

and

one star

happiness in

in my soul

trouble outside

thy words are weaving

a fairy story

with the magic looms

of long ago

so long ago

~~ASHES~~ POEM

Rose-petals and woodwind

You

Dismal weeping of Kreisler on the fourteenth harmonic  
iron-rollers on the gravel

lurching and scrunching

with a jangle of pistons

You in me

This incessant rasp and irritation

rankling as a supreme passion

may make me kill

this other you

and me

and

i will slide through the centuries

soulless and blind

noiseless as a ghost

gliding on the weeds of the wind

and in each tangle

fumble

for something i have lost

and cannot remember

Through interplanetary space

slinking

like a fox with one eye

i will go

(incomplete) P.T.O



Continuation A C H E

~~Searching~~

~~Searching~~

searching

searching

for a sensation I have lost  
and cannot remember

..... thus it is

I found

it's better to have you and suffer  
than not to have you at all

POEM

Rose-petals and woodwind  
You  
Dismal weeping of Kreisler on the fourteenth harmonic  
iron rollers on the gravel  
lurching and scrunching  
with a jangle of pistons  
You in me  
This incessant rasp and irritation  
rankling as a supreme passion  
may make me kill  
this other you  
and me  
and  
I will slide through the centuries  
soulless and blind  
noiseless as a ghost  
gliding on the weeds of the wind  
and in each tangle  
fumble  
for something I have lost  
and cannot remember  
Through interplanetary space  
slinking  
like a fox with one eye  
I will go  
searching  
searching  
for a sensation I have lost  
and cannot remember  
.....thus it is  
I found  
it's better to have you and suffer  
than not to have you at all

S E R E N A D E

when flesh meets flesh  
in the silent darkness

and we lie <sup>mouth</sup> to mouth  
deliriously in the dark

and arms and legs are twined  
in a wild ecstatic gesture

and the blood is another darkness  
flowing mysteriously in my veins

when i have looked on flesh and loved and lain  
deliriously in flesh again

and the throbbing of thy breast is the nautch song  
that has unloosened a mysterious self in me

let me mingle with the darkness and the night and you  
and graze of the dark mystery of life that i shall never know

for you are the mystery of life that i shall never discover  
and i the only clue that i shall ever find



SKETCH

a cicada

was singing

merrily

in the palm

grove

when the air

was warm

and sharp

and the pool

was molten

ore

was molten

love

among the

brown

palm

stems

SOLACE

mud house without a roof  
and the temple-tree bending over you  
pouring a song of blossoms and crooked stems

symbol of my battered soul and another

pour cascade of blossom  
on the gaping heart

oil runs smoothly through machinery

S E P T E M B E R

when flesh meets flesh  
in the silent darkness

and we lie to mouth  
deliriously in the dark

and arms and legs are twined  
in a wild ecstatic gesture

and the blood is another darkness  
flowing mysteriously in my veins

when i have looked on flesh and loved and lain  
deliriously in flesh again

and the throbbing of <sup>your</sup>~~the~~ breast is the nautch song  
that has unloosened a mysterious self in me

let me mingle with the darkness and the night and you  
and gaze of the dark mystery of life that i shall never know

for you are the mystery of life that i shall never discover  
and i the only clue that i <sup>will</sup>~~shall~~ ever find



B E C A U S E

i love you

because

you are understanding

in

ununderstanding

i love you

because

you are sameness

in

diversity

i love you

because

you are

despair

and

sorrow

and

madness

madness

THROB

a skylight  
is puffing moonbeams  
in my room

the monster machine of the world  
is gleaming outside  
and.....

ah  
what will the little grass do?

SKETCH

a cicada  
was singing  
merrily  
in the palm  
grove

when the air  
was warm  
and sharp

and the pool  
was molten  
ore  
was molten  
love  
among the  
brown  
palm  
stems

SOLILOQUY

lean willows  
are sprouting by the stream  
in merry hordes

the dark water  
is the sad tale  
of a lover

but my tear-drop  
is an ocean

no willows have i  
to comfort  
me

## POEM FOR TWO NICE YOUNG PEOPLE

Her eyes full of darkness and her arms of balloons  
 A frail figure in the enormous verandah,  
 Back from the Fête where she shot down the moons  
 And planets clattering round her at the booth, Miranda!  
~~Troubled~~ <sup>stung</sup> by another's voice to stark oleander.

Tensed before the target, her small body drawn  
 In, like an accurate winging bird;  
 A child's hands at the gun, more guts than brawn  
 She looked some immeasurably wild and lovely thing,  
 Stored entirely with the whole of Beauty's word.

Now she stands smiling in a different mood,  
 Her arms full of balloons, and half awake like the morning;  
 Her eyes full of a good light ( the good  
 Constant and ~~homely~~ <sup>stirred</sup> sparkle his timely warning )  
 In her grand volitions all life, adorning.

So bud, maiden, bird, deliver ~~are - old~~  
 Your ornate pictures and sentences to the world,  
 But the simple white necklace of the believer  
 Adorning your dark throat is the mould  
 Of he holds and you, as the revolving and just world.

So utter, ~~utter~~ <sup>make</sup> the white sentences of endeavour  
 That trim the flame and launched all Helen's ships.  
 The music and flame you both know deliver  
 Only the formless and the thundering whips  
 - Go soon to the beautiful and black ships.

TAMBIMUTTU

BE TO ME AS THE SUN IS TO THE SKY.....

Be to me as the sun is to the sky, while the crumpled hours  
are withering like blossoms

Spring in me as an eternal spring, unbudding a swirl of light  
and laughter in a silver ~~shining~~ rose *roll*

Be my light when the ~~rolling~~ cogs of darkness pass silently  
over the face of the earth

Abide with me like the firm rock in the forest and the  
undying whisper hovering on Laxapana\* like a molten  
~~eternal~~ palm-frond in the air

Speak to me with the voice of the streamside willows and the  
murmur of ~~platinum~~ moonlight spattering the  
passionate rice-fields

And hold me fast beloved in the fastness of thy loneliness

A joy removed from the breeding of the earth

Hold fast  
fast-

\* a waterfall in Lylon



## J A F F N A

Here by toddy roots, the Golden Oriole  
Prints yellow tracks across the zig-zag fences;  
The heart slumbers in the heat, with the lorikeet  
And mind's bereft of all extravagant fancies;  
Her velvet eye in the ancient Walauwa  
Fondles a paper rose with her soft glances.

Home, home, where is it you started?  
Did you grow with the coral under Kayts,  
Streak with wild horses on Delft isle  
Flower in the crystal, passionless nights?  
Lone by strange Fort Hammanhiel  
Unravel the world's wrongs and rights?

From northermost Point Pedro, the spanking  
North Easter encircles Jaffna's tulips—  
Dusty tulip-trees of the maiden,  
To many, their childhood toy and julep!  
Remember the fruit that were the play tops  
Underneath the old school-house's burlap?

Flat as a table-top, the landscape:  
Gothic cathedrals of palmyras, doves.  
Salt estuaries with heron and flamingo  
And pensive stork, the memory adores;  
All this, Jaffna, and more, you are to those,  
Sprung in your red earth and bird-filled groves.

TAMBIMUTTU

## S o n g

In your eyes the waters flow  
The curls of the river;  
Where the silent pump heaves water  
To the well-heads.

Well-head and bull-dance  
And the mix of petals  
Are your eyes to me  
- The mirror of my delight.

Scatter the roses to the wind  
And let the loud room sing  
Sing; Of your delight, my delight  
The well-head of them all.

PRAYER

Let me taste the silence that flows  
Behind your dark eyes, O Mirvana.  
The bird is heavy on the hill  
And the silence fills

Its black vessels of sound.  
The ladder is broken to your rooms  
And two hands are flowers  
Falling, falling

With the beat of the sea.  
Crush the petals on the dust  
And pitch the blood  
On the running wind

On the running sand.  
The world is vast  
And you are watching, watching  
Through the split in the leaves-

Drown my soul, down  
Down into the night without desire-  
Where the reflections are no more, no more  
And rooms are broken into vast spaces.

X Bhaddit 'heaven'

B H A R A T.

It was this fierce heat set fire to Kalidasa  
Kambar, Valmiki, Avvaiyar,  
In this antigonon land, wounded with flamboyante,  
Blood, poinsettias, and the bitterness there;  
O' terrible furnace of endeavour  
Where cooks the saint with the wild boar.

It was a fierce heat shook humming birds  
Aflutter, in the thickets of Wardha;  
Set the blue note in the bulbul's throat  
And darker streaks for his gray head;  
Kindled the faggots at Rajgat  
To make the red rose of his love.

Laureate fell the bright planes  
Over Ganges River, and heat broke  
For a moment; the sobbing river  
Filled the desert and the heart spoke;  
After deluge, the buds broke:  
Bharat shook with the thunder.

Sings coveal on the coral tree  
Lapped in flame from chest to throat;  
Heat arackles in the hills' veins  
And thus the crotolaria's born;  
The naked child of the innocent lanes  
Grows into the lusty man.



It was this furnace shaped the axe,  
 Drove it through the dark wood;  
 Shaped the pimeval locks  
 That bind the dreaming sage's head,  
 Launched the boats for Lanka

And further than the present's good.

## 2.

And so the Dreamer-at-the-Gate  
 Has pin-pointed a difficult star;  
 The easy and the elphemeral  
 Slide away, and the hear stirs  
 To a Visionary's difficult task  
 The mind stuck on the Time's burrs.

All then is difficult, the fever licks  
 Burning matter into new shapes;

The Idealist's pointed star  
 Swings o'ver the fiery lakes;  
 Assets the true and good  
 What once was beautiful.

And thus it is I greet you,  
 Bharat of the story book;  
 Where Arjun was bewildered  
 And Krishna gazed his flocks,  
 Where Sita uttered love  
 Drew the human map.

### AERIAL FLOWERS

Fireworks! The broad pillars on either hand  
Of the House of Representatives, tall  
And solemn, frame the painted picture below:  
The turgid crowd beside the jappanned ~~and~~  
And still sea, a gay and motley fall;  
Near us, relieved by a patch of Buddhist yellow.

The brigh lights of ice-cream cars runnel  
The Beira's dark sable - still water.  
To our left, on tall pylons, see,  
Two red lights, like a fairy's durnbell!  
On high, the fire-flowers, leaves, flutter,  
Delicate like these Burmese faces beside me.

With a snowfall brush the sapphire sky is painted  
In fire, ~~with~~ with a shower of ~~the~~ spheres, ovals, aces,  
Ferns, trees, palms, naves and steeples,  
And troll and airy in the fire-house mated;

### BLACK ROSES

(Apartheid)

Jan Smuts died and the people wept,  
Black roses faded in the African veldt;  
Black bodies luminous with blood and sweat,  
Fell like dead leaves, and yet  
The furious wind whips the black, limp leaves,  
Black corn, black Mondays, sad eyes:  
Fearful hearts rattle by the torrid shore,  
Lobengula's black wrath is no more.  
The sun ~~shines~~ shines unequally in Africa now,  
The mighty will persist, and the weak go;  
The sirocco will consume the black roses,  
Racial fires fire the hoar poor houses;  
Jan Smuts rise from Table-Mountainside,  
Thunder and black lightning in his just ~~the~~ eyes.

## BIRTHDAY POEM FOR BAPOOTA.

==== 7-1-1953

On this your eighty-second birthday, we remember  
 The trim and spritely Islam Gymkhana member,  
 The gallant captain, who out of many a fix  
 Pulled his side through with his heaver for a six,  
 Or sudden googlie that skidaddled a man for nix;  
 We also remember the President of the Club  
 Scintillating brightly over the drinks and grub;  
 The Master Mason in his dizzying robes  
 Dispensing kindness to those snobs and nabobs;  
 Chairman of Committees and of Anjuman-I-Islam  
 The eldest architext; but chiefly today  
 We think of our own Bapoota, kindest of all the Beys,  
 Who for the pretty girls still has a wicked eye,  
 Lying in Tyaba's lap, and dreaming of bigger fry!  
 Tyaba is tiny, but Suraiya we know is big  
 So Bapoota nowadays alas, cares not a fig  
 For Amena, Rabia, Ruffoo, Jappy or At,  
 He's shifted over we know to Suraiya, and that is that !  
 His roving eye will discover many another miss  
 We know, and with that merry toast,  
 We end our birthday letter and send it to the post.

Love From  
 Tambi & Guri

16th February 1952.

## BIRTHDAY POEM FOR THE VERY BUSY GIRL

Well, dear Doll, another year has gone  
 On the swift swallow wing flown;  
 The scintillating girl of Indira Mansion,  
 One solid year more grown,  
 And all of us, Bapoota included, now know,  
 You are the merr laughter and the lights of home.

How can five feet grow as you do  
 Year after year, in our estimation?  
 You explode daily in the quiet rooms  
 In showers of spangles, gold and carnation,  
 Darkest rose, black hair, busy fingers, ~~dancing fingers~~, dancing words  
 A subtle and devastating compilation

In five feet compact, and thought important.  
 So like Surya, ~~and~~ Varuni and Agni we praise you,  
 The elemental and essential Guri;

Bright as quicksilver and busy as the ant  
 How that poor Bapoota's desk you misconstrue!

-- And thus may you remain Anna's busy and fulminating Guri!



4.

CEYLON.

When Safia dreams under the palm thatch  
 Her golden arms cool as water-melons,  
 The palms shoot off their chorus to the burnished  
 sky,  
 And moon-beams are extravagant with their bright  
 shillings.  
 Heart of the grass and scent of the twisted vine  
 Have made her beautiful, and the water slips over  
 stones,  
 The ferns have glow-worms in their hair,  
 And the moss grows on the trees bones,  
 Delicate within her eyes grow the wild flowers,  
 Weaves the <sup>dreaming</sup> island, out of <sup>magic</sup> music and fragile tones.

*[Illegible signature]*

*Ceylonese Vignettes*

being a special Independence  
Day' radio feature written  
and produced

# Ceylonesse Vignettes

**ARROWHEAD** of green trees  
in the quiver of the Ocean  
O Ptolemaic Taprobane, Se-  
rendib to Arab,  
Coronet of cassia, sharp taste  
of cinnamon,  
Ilam of the Tamil, Sinhala  
of the Aryan.

The island which is known by the  
name of Lanka  
Royal Valmiki and the text books  
say;  
Tharkshish of the Bible, whence  
every three years  
The ships of Tyre and Sidon brought  
ivory and apes,  
Roman Palaesimundu, where the  
Ravan's eyes  
Ravished the gold princess of Sita  
Eliya;  
Maya Rata, Ruhuna, Pihiti (the  
King's Country)  
Lanka is divided into three parts.

**SITA:**  
Unless someone speaks the truth  
sometimes  
For all the time, my friends, it  
would be boring,  
We shall all believe in Amirthalingam  
Whose sole desire is to sell cabook  
to the Government.

**JEAN:**  
On this day, we must forget the  
disease and poverty  
Let us think of our jazz bands, the  
guardians of culture,  
The carnivals at Ladies' College and  
Bolgoda Lake,  
Where you may be happy if you  
had the money.

**JAYANTHA:**  
And there is our Director of Cul-  
tural Relations  
The most important one.  
With his minute, fiery heart  
Clocking in the tides of a monthly  
salary.

**JEAN:**  
But my dear, he was educated at  
Columbia  
Where there is ignorance of poetry  
and vice.  
Like the Bronx he is equable and  
nice.

**JAYANTHA:**  
Ceylon, is and that I was born in  
With the temple tree and the iguana.  
Your waterfall dispelling the dark-  
ness.

**SITA:**  
Lyrical Island in the agony of birth  
The harbour lights eating into the  
island,  
The palms all sundered  
With the salette of their fierceness.  
The harbour lights eat into the body  
The harbour lights warn us day  
and night  
Shall we sell the blood and have  
the money  
Sell the cabook, and get stinking  
tight?

The price of cabook is on the up  
and up  
And when it isn't up, it will be down.  
Now that we've started, we mustn't  
stop.  
We'll be growing cabook in our  
gardens soon.

**TAMBIMUTTU:**  
Arrowhead of green trees in the  
quiver of the Ocean.

to Arab.  
Coronet of cassia, sharp taste of  
cinnamon,  
Ilam of the Tamil Sinhala of the  
Aryan.  
The island which is known by the  
name of Lanka  
Royal Valmiki and the text books  
say:  
Tharkshish of the Bible, whence  
every three years  
The ships of Tyre and Sidon brought  
ivory and apes.  
Roman Palaesimundu, where the  
Ravan's eyes  
Ravished the gold princess of Sita  
Eliya;  
Maya Rata, Ruhuna, Pihiti (the  
King's country)  
Lanka is divided into three parts.  
The chaplet of Mauryan Ashoka and  
Sanghamitta  
His pious daughter of the holy  
Second Order.  
Mahinda, monk brother, Bodigupta,  
Sumitta,  
Lak Maha Lee and Jaya Maha Lee.  
Sacred bowl of coral in the lap of  
Arya Varta,  
Green branch of the bo-tree carry-  
ing the Wheel of the Law:  
In the bell of dagaba and cone of  
goparam.  
Two Thousand Five Hundred ashoka  
b'ooms.  
Where Elara the Just and Young  
Duttha Gamini  
Set into motion the Revolving  
Wheel,  
The stars chase the Wesak lamps of  
the Vihara  
And the green years break into red  
flame and yellow.  
Like the Sigiriya rock-bird, giant  
Garuda  
That has resisted the rip and tide  
of ages,  
Through Vuyst, Dharmapala and  
Ehelepola  
The grand sweep of Mihintale in  
your wings.

**JAYANTHA:**  
*In the tea boutique there is a girl  
In the tea boutique, a fey heart;*

*In the tea boutique there is a smile,  
But who will dare catch it  
But the young man in the car?*

*Under the brown thatch an age old  
richness,  
Cloth of jasmin and moon, a simple  
splendour.  
Under the brown thatch her fierce  
candour  
And who will dare catch it  
But the young man in the car?*

*Under the brown thatch the simple  
bow of her lips,  
Under the palm rafters her dark  
tresses  
Blowing. Under the kerosene lamp  
her black eyes smouldering  
For memories of the cool and  
blossomy hills  
And the faithless young man in a  
car.*

JEAN:

Under the jak tree the fruit is  
growing  
And the fat fruit ripens and is shed.  
Under the jak tree the people  
gathering  
With the new born crying out for  
bread.

SITA:

Under the bassia stems the black  
bass gather  
Striving for the new-fleshed tender  
meat,  
Unholy carrion of this strict  
weather  
That will never bring us to any  
good.

JAYANTHA:

In our beautiful land there is no  
hunger and poverty,  
Consider what the tourists say,  
consider for instance

The wine filled coconut tree, with  
its one hundred uses,  
Colombo, the cleanest of Eastern  
cities;

The life as extravagant as the be-  
wildering vegetation.

The Silver Dawn, full of 'O Man  
River' and 'O Tchichania'

Among the concrete and garish  
plaster sung by the 'chesty' bass,  
The finest club in the East.

SITA &amp; JEAN:

Incursion into the land of the ukulele  
Land of the lotus and flagree  
temples

Heavy with Moselle and figurines;

Four-stringed Maori toad, But it  
strafed

Strafed, quashed, Stradivarius by  
the whistling stream.

If you really love me darling buy  
a motor car

Papa will think my darling o how  
rich you are.

Papa will think my darling o how  
rich you are

If you really love me darling buy  
a motor car.

JAYANTHA:

National day is a day for rejoicing

The choice is not for us too simple.

The brazen world will fly the flags  
and bunting;

It is a sign of youth also, the pimple,  
That adorns the young and sparkling  
face.

The jolly human race,

However old and wrinkled or simply  
dimpled.

On this important and great day

Say the prayers for country and for  
glory.

While the leaden minutes tread

Pad the simple well known story

And if it's hoary

We can all be just as terribly gay.

The Under Secretaries we know have  
little to do.

Woo the Ministers, sir; You'll have  
something done?

Remember P. Saravanamuttu's sixer

When he socked that leather as only  
gentlemen do.

And over their heads it flew

Sara, we know, was never a splendid  
mixer.

SITA:

At the Tamil Union the grey heads are  
nodding

Prodding at motes and straws and  
all things odd.

Why did Sir Oliver join the S.S.C.,  
Sanction the sale of straw to Ruthven  
Todd?

Todd is odd.

The God of Sloth and Dullness de-  
frauding.

The land is old and civilized we all  
declare.

Dare we project further the enquir-  
ing mind?

Astounding slums of Pettah, the  
empty chatter

Of Sooty Banda and others of the  
kind,

Fit for the school mag and the duck's  
pond

No doubt, but heigh ho, heigh ho, for  
our ancient culture.

JEAN:

The splendid vein of materialism in  
our land,

(O poet who's been selling our Big  
Soul to the West!)

In the West now he's somewhat un-  
welcome guest,

Will surely, my dears, attest,  
To the survival and virility of ONLY

THE BEST.

But National Day, to be proper, like  
New Year's Day,

May, my dears, be used to further  
ambition.

—Personal or collective we don't care  
a damn

Since it is our blessed and human  
condition;

And if it's not sedition

What ho, what ho, for another Bri-  
bery Commission.

SITA:

We don't give a damn.

JEAN:

We can't care a damn.

JAYANTHA:

What ho, what ho, for another Bri-  
bery Commission!

TAMBIMUTTU:

The breezes on the midden

Unbidden linger long.

The violet and the primrose

Chose my simple song

And with the gong

The old words harden

Island of sweet pleasure

Leisured in the sun.

Kingsfishers wrote your glory

The story of your dawn

The poets unborn

Will add their treasure.

And while the ages lustrate

Flusters the cool mind

Island of my childhood

Ride the raging wind.

Happiness bind

As the storm clouds muster

Now the shadows lengthen

Strengthen the old ways,

Lanka's long pageant

Agent of more praise

In new days

Our pristine glory waken:

O the Old words harden

Burden of changed mind.

The wind of Pain arise

Wise and most unkind

Yet to bind

The breezes of the midden.



## JAYANTA:

The world of green that would be  
man  
Speaks the dark words that utter  
birth  
In the jungle the bitter truth  
Lives in the delicate line of the  
worm  
Ageing as the hills and streams,  
Insubstantial as the wind.  
Seasons melt from rust to green  
Poised on the bougainvillea thorn.  
The revolving seasons mix  
In the mind's coloured horn.  
Have of split leaves  
Phases of the parent moon.

## SITA:

Under the dark stream the same  
meaning  
Confusion of the same things  
Under the shadow of Pidurutalagala  
And Adam's Peak, so shift in  
accent,  
The heart to adventure wildly  
The millennium come.  
Heart of the rose in all matter  
Rose of the growing spirit  
Reddening the unending struggle  
That demands and yet gives  
Without surcease, and unstinting  
The cypress, the palm, and the  
lily.

## JEAN:

As birds go, as winds blow,  
Under the revolving horizon's rim,  
The will's direction suddenly  
changes  
Shapes the face of a new day;  
Utterance of a change of heart  
Bound to the same roots.  
The world of green growing to man  
Wavers on the fringe of doubt.  
The icy weather chills the buds  
Loosens the intemperate worm.  
O Freedom sleeps when Freedom's  
rife  
Cautions the mocking bird.

## TAMBIMUTTU:

But on the river I have heard  
The minnows calling each to each.  
The birds fall in white confusion  
Round the season's pearly throat.  
The delicate rivers start  
In leaf and root and rose.

The birth of all the singeing buds  
On the tall mango tree:  
Annunciation of the beginning  
Voice of glory to be,  
Make believe, real, and not  
To believe, because of the acid  
fruit.

What are my eyes, web of dreams  
Wrested from darkness into being?  
The hinged doors of love recede,  
To the darkness of Unknowing.  
Dark on dark the Miltonic setting  
And to the dust returning.

Birth's often the exciting part  
Beginning, a burden.  
The green, new islands of the sea  
Are the coral's persistence.  
The design, the direction, the love  
conspired  
To give us this new perfection.

## CHORUS:

Stars are on the Kandy Lake  
Green fields in the Vanni.  
The tall palm waves by the railway  
shed  
And there are roses in the post  
office.

From our sleep we are plucked at  
last,  
Slumbering long we have woken.  
The thousand lamps of the temple  
are lit

The thamarai blossoms sparkle.  
We've thrown a human chain to  
Sri Pada  
As of old. The flowers and our  
bodies mixed.

Can't you see the flowers on Sri  
Pada  
Among our children's faces?  
We hail our Ceylonese Nation and  
State

The first our country knew  
Sinhalese and Burgher, Tamil  
and Moor United in our humility  
salute you.

# LAMBIMUTTU on COLOMBO

AND so home. Revolving time has brought  
The sun to his oven, and the traveler home.  
Eyes I looked at by the garden gate  
Are gone with hair's brilliance, and kind words;  
The simple look framed in her lashes' ovals,  
Lost with the bright moments, and gay birds.

IN you h we picked the lily of the Beira  
For tranquillity: <sup>green</sup> and <sup>pure</sup> bamboo grove;  
By Galle Buck, we took the breeze's kisses,  
For her innocent kisses, and were much in love;  
Played in her hair schools of silver fishes,  
And in her breasts slept the turtle dove.

SHE was all desire, from Mount Lavinia's beaches,  
To chiffon/spray on the harbour mole;  
And when lights powdered the masts' stresses,  
Flowers grew in the water, and fiery salamanders;  
When the white sun began to roll  
On the lighthouse top, we discovered silvery places.

IN the Park, the iron fountain wept,  
Softly among the duck-weed and tall rushes;  
We were children, and I remember Mary  
Who whispered to me, "I am from England";  
On Sundays, we danced to the Band's  
Ta-ra-rey, <sup>trailing</sup> four loops and ribbons round the band-stand.

THIS was long ago, when mud-stained boys  
Cranking bicycles, were shot through narrow gates;  
Seaming motors deposited some,  
And Suppi in his carriage, bound in brass,  
Seemed a sedate and inky pirate  
Singing "Yo, Ho, Ho, and a Bottle of Rum".

LIFE on "Treasure Island" was competitive that year;  
The boys even knew the book by heart  
"Best Form at School", the teacher's had said.  
Desks became bloody decks, and clear Rang cutlasses and pirate's craft  
When through this droll life-symbol we were led.

WE "crammed" for "places", first, second, fourth,  
For "prizes"; strained a muscle; shut out the noise;  
Only the noise grew, and everywhere,  
New schools donned caps, to prove their worth;  
Life's cheer-leaders in correct disguise  
Urged the green lads, it was all fair.

PLAY the game; but Victory is best:  
Three years at cricket, we defeated Royal;  
The rehearsed stance of sport, is like life itself;  
And Victory is sweet, once you've tasted it,  
At Waterloo, <sup>now</sup> the rugby boys were loyal;  
Competition, Darwin said, is life itself.

THE guns were divvied, by the college armory, <sup>we</sup>  
Bull's-eye hit meant, <sup>we</sup> completed our mission.  
We shot the day's eyes at twenty-five paces,  
And laughed; we were yet bold and free;  
Yes, carefree; the bombs and atomic fission  
Were wonders of science for the young rascals.

AND yet our city grew with us, crammed  
With her antique gentleness, and quiet days;  
But with the <sup>urgent</sup> <sup>use</sup> of quartz and macadam  
Her gentle and impulsive heart was killed;  
Became the whorl of the bazaar's maze,  
Joined for ever, to the hardware, the rupees, and the tin.

WICKED city lights, ringing the breakfast table,  
The slant light reveals love turned to stone;  
The blood of the zinnias in the glass bowl  
Bathes the stark masonry of our Babel;  
The headless torso at the table sits alone,  
And through anxious windows, the stone dogs howl.

THE rubber bats have settled in the  
old house.  
Of the steel-baron; black as tea-  
leaves  
His tangy smile, which has released  
the civilising  
Commodore, on unsuspecting villagers,  
and the nobbled horse:  
That in luck, with the unlucky  
grieves,  
For lost innocence, and the fever  
rising.

AND even a thief shall be honoured  
in this house.  
Filled with paper roses, under neon  
lighting.  
The telephone rings, and the magis-  
trate speaks  
To pronounce the dead, living, and  
living, dead.  
Magdotes have fouled the lorikeet's  
fighting.  
And guavas rot beside the high walls.

THE sewers of Port Said have in-  
vaded this house.  
Rings the dinner gong, the under-  
taker enters  
In his severe clothes, and adds the  
day's takings.  
—The innocent dead, the time mows;  
Sits down to dinner with the dis-  
senters.  
Who have joined him tonight; who  
are with him now.

AND so, there's terror today in the  
old house:  
Steel flowers burgeon in Colombo  
Harbour.  
Word's dither has come through the  
wires,  
And her delicate side, Time's ex-  
plosion blows;  
Breached is the peaceful mind, and  
antique arbour.  
The old terrors now in new fires.

IT'S ancient the theme; competition,  
strife;  
Remember it in my friend, Basil  
Wright  
"Song of Ceylon?" The tranquil  
Buddha  
Who shipped in green glades, and then  
knife  
That suddenly descended; the noise,  
the stabbing lights  
Of the bazaar's squabble and thunder;

AND the city humming on its con-  
crete axis.  
And so without presuming to be exact,  
And mindful of advantages the days  
bring,  
I mourn the passing of an age, when  
the bases  
Of our lives were intact, and each act  
Sprang from ancestral grace, and  
sound living.

THAT was the grace we found in  
the green wood,  
When kindness spouted like milk from  
each bosom;  
The natural traffic of man, beast and  
child  
Set in the ancient tope, and village  
good;  
But with the mid-century's turning,  
we saw the season  
Change her decent pace; saw it for  
treason.

YET all one loves quickly changes;  
We feel deceived, under new  
pressure;  
In strange beds the old rivers lie.  
And a new direction, the loved pat-  
tern dis-arranges;  
In the whirlpool is sucked heart's  
treasure;  
And then you fade, you fade alone,  
and die.

CLOSENBURG, CEYLON

A bit further down, it's land's end;  
Here on the toasting, curving beach of Galle,  
Looping whitely and serenely southwards,  
Many a trader and marauder like a gull  
Settled for a while on this rocky escarpment,  
Grubbing for spices, ivory and jewels.

The humbler traffic of the beach, the rock-crabs  
Like spiders, starfish, and the stranded jelly:  
Shells, like bassia flowers and melon seeds,  
And stronger tints on the conch's belly  
Flaunt as bright a bazaar for the bathers;  
The tepid sea's an acid-green like nelli.

The viridian palms frame caste caste<sup>ed</sup> Castled Closenburg -  
The sea-salt dream of a fierce old sea captain;  
The ding-dong breeze tears through enormous ~~the~~ windows  
To a timbered hall lined with coral and gypsum.  
Sheer drop of rockface to the white-lace water  
Is a rug, squat Closenburg is wrapped in.

On the sea's apple, far off, a buggalow  
Is a faint smudge on the horizon's line.  
The mind's lake ripples with yachts and silver ships,  
And the heart wishes the round world were mine,  
To toss to you across the ~~wind-swept~~ apple water,  
Mix your darling, shy, wide eyes with mine.

TAMBIMUTTU



*The Standard*  
*Weekly*

## CANNA

July 28 1911

There was a day when you were in  
love,

And the canna heads came tumbling  
down;

There was a day when the tempestuous  
heart

Was a riot of colour, in the drab town;

And as they vanished, bright colours  
fading,

Those trellised eyes faded and  
drowned.

Like rich cloths, and hair, fading,

And ocean liner, over the sky line,

Days, hands, lips vanished;

There was nothing there that was  
mine.

The canna grew again in the same bed,

Dear flesh, beautiful as wine.

So fill the gardens with the tumble of  
canna,

Ring the tinted heads, by the gold  
coast,

—Straight assegai of the passionate  
garden,

Intricate growth of the heart's thirst;

The fulfilment and the resurrection

Of the unlucky, and the lost.

TAMBIMUTTU

EPITALAMIC LINES TO HANEEF AND ZAHRA

Now, at last, the splendid rain is falling  
And the nughty earth is spoiled with kissing  
The bird of sleep has fallen on her eye  
~~Now~~ With its raven breast and duskier wings;  
And he, no longer, has his rambling wishes,  
The joining rain has nestled in his eye.

Oh bless the summer of this sapling country  
And praise the marriage of tangle, corn and fern;  
In every well there is a reflection,  
In every tangled heart a shaft for entry;  
Now you have proved it, dears, may nations learn,  
In time, to imitate your perfection.

Tender face of the wife, Zahra  
Slim citnara, chiming with bird and sandalwood,  
In your black hair you secreted the waterwall,  
Stole the butterfly sunlight from the branches;  
Your sun-bathed body, my dear, is India,  
In your new love I wish you as fierce a hunger.

Now as monsoon drops on tope and cottage path  
And strange new shafts of light carve a new world's face,  
Loves hammer rings on the mountain-sidehead;  
There is glory in each bird-breast.  
I send you my wishes and my praise,  
For only dreaming and the love, is actual.

Of the morning.  
Bind us in  
With the splendid  
The falling and  
Heavy with your  
O wake us now.  
secret pattered feet

## Rhymes of the Times

## GALLE FACE GREEN

(February 5 1951)

In the morning haze, sky and sea,  
uniform,  
The bobbing faces and silk unbrel-  
las gay;  
The paper windmill seller covered  
with wheels  
Of whirling colour from head to  
foot, warns  
Sloe-eyed girls and brats it's  
a great day,  
And life's exactly what one feels.  
Offshore, the Vijaya's hull,  
ash-grey,  
Look! Now changing to a powder  
blue!  
From the sky's traffic stealing  
colour  
For children's wonder, on this  
fine day!  
Humped chameleon stuck in the  
ocean's glue,

Nation's servant: the morning's  
jeweller.

Far off the ships converge on  
trade routes,  
Their holds full of some Ceylon  
sun, perhaps,  
Their goal, Cathay, or some small  
Pacific port,  
Floating down with timbers,  
resins, fruits,  
Jutes, teas, coriander; but by  
drum-taps  
We float today a different kind  
of boat,

A magic-boat, if you will, for our  
children;  
From such modest launchings  
were Armadas fuelled,  
Arrogant Troys taken, and  
Americas filled,  
And England Dunkirk saved from  
the savage cauldron;  
It is our boat of freedom!  
clapped, belled,  
To open sea! And to the future  
willed.

Freedom is also what one makes  
it;

As I see these young cadets,  
march by  
With their elder brothers, their  
faces brushed  
By the free air, their eyes lit  
With a new light, and as the  
Vampires fly  
In cohort with Brigands and  
Lancasters, I am impressed.

Common Wealth, Fraternity,  
Equality will save us all.  
These English faces are just, and  
old, and ours

Turned to the sun will shine yet  
with the old wisdom.

Today I saw a young child by  
Galle Face call

To his Freedom, locked in the old  
book's covers—

Bless, O bless his birthright, and  
beautiful kingdom.

T.

## ELARA

THERE were many voices  
echoing through the wood,  
And all depended on a single  
word.

Elara, you chose without think-  
ing

The way the koel and the ocean  
sing:

Chose to meet strife, man to man,  
The way the roots and the rivers  
run.

With Duttha Gamini, you fought  
man to man,

And died as justly as you lived;  
To save life was ever your plan.  
And you died, as you lived, a good  
man.

The armies were saved, but you  
Elara, died.

But lived in legend, Tamba-  
panni's pride.

T.

And coo  
Into the pool of  
The chaos of  
Bind us in the splendour of  
With the morning.  
Of the morning.  
Lined to the roots, the fire,  
The falling dust;  
Heary with your proffered tears  
O make us grow.

# J A K T R E E

Let us celebrate, firstly, your fruit,  
Large as pumpkins and golden-skinned;  
Chinese lanterns of the tree world  
- And brighter glow of the emerald shade;  
Rough-burred, hay-smelling, a holiday feast  
In the sleepy old village, when ripe.

And secondly, all those hot chestnuts  
Of your bounty, that raven-haired imps  
Take out of the wood-fire ashes,  
And burn fingers with their rollicking wishes.

Your fruit-buds are the crowning glory in the soup  
With delicate sea creatures; and to some  
You are the hearty breakfast, or noon's asparagus,  
Dinner's sauerkraut; to the craftsman stout timber.

You are versatile jak tree, in our jazzy landscape  
And some, they say, talked with angels under your shade.

**Tambimuttu**

J A F F N A

Here by toddy roots, the Golden Oriole  
Prints yellow tracks across the zig-zag fences.  
The heart slumbers in the heat, with the lorikeet,  
And mind's bereft of all extravagant fancies;  
Her velvet eye in the ancient Walauiwa x  
Fondles a paper rose with her soft glances.

Home, home, where is it you started?  
Did you grow with the coral under Kayts,  
Streak with wild horses on Delft isle  
Flower in the crystal, passionless nights?  
Lone by strange Fort Hammenhiel  
Unravel the world's wrongs and rights?

From Northernmost Point Pedro, the spanking  
North-Easter encircles Jaffna's tulips -  
Dusty tulip-trees of the maidan,  
To many their childhood toy and julep!  
Remember the fruit that were the play tops  
Underneath the old school-house's burlap?

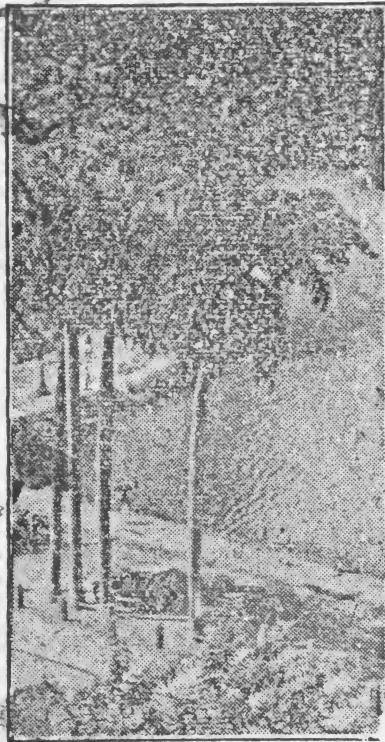
Flat as a table-top, the landscape;  
Gothic cathedrals of palmyrahs, doves.  
Salt estuaries with heron and flamingo;  
And pensive stork that memory adores;  
All this, Jaffna, and more, you are to those,  
Sprung in your red earth and bird-filled groves.

Tambimuttu



## Rhymes of the Times

## KANDY LAKE



IT'S peaceful here, by the constructed lake.  
Buildings sit on the water, and ripples break  
On an ornamental wall, pierced with triangles,  
Which declare it Kandyan. Jingles  
Of fussy trees, make a bright border,  
And the stentorian cabbage-palm routs the disorder.  
Cassia's candelabra hang yellow, and the rain tree  
Thrusts its coral whiskers at the powder-blue sky.  
The garden at the southern end is a Persian carpet.  
Rare like cobra's diamond, and famous as a song-hit.  
I envy these nut-brown children tumbling down the red road,  
Their school must be near heaven, on the sloping hill's side.  
Slender as the lake's reeds, and tense like the sun's heat,  
This is the elfin kingdom, they inherit.  
They say sloe-eyed princesses once dreamed on that island,  
And also a mother drowned there, quite out of mind.  
Dark and light, the waters, their ancient secrets keep,  
Surface moves and ripples on the edge of sleep. T.

And coelobur  
Into the pool of tears  
The chaos of hours,  
Bind us in the pool of tears  
With the splendid rose,  
Of the morning.  
Mixed to the roots, the fire, the rain,  
The falling dust;  
Heavy with your proffered tears  
O make us grow.

## MADHU, CEYLON

Emblem of faith, set in the sun-wounded wood  
Of red palu, and longan, tasting of like skinned grape;  
Here the Faithful think of eternal good  
And bathe in a river full of water lilies.  
The journey was full of dust and flies,  
And nights haunted with mutterings and leopard's roar,  
But by the camp-fires they said their beads  
And dined well off the jungle plum and wild boar;  
And arrived at Madhu, in the jungle's recesses,  
Found the ~~junc~~ journey had been good and revealing:  
What it is the search and trouble blesses,  
What binds the heart, and what the wood-nymphs bring.

## MY COUNTRY, MY VILLAGE

When I was young, the flame-tree and the Jasmin,  
 Gilded my youthful eyes with tenderness,  
 For natural things - the lotus-pond and the palmyrah:  
 The ring dove tore the air with natural passion;  
 At Atchuvely, my Northern home, all else  
 Seemed unimportant beside a bassia\*star.

The carrion eagle atop the rambling lanes  
 Wheeled in the pastel sky, and a big owl  
 Dozed in a tree beside the tethered cow;  
 The goat coughed among the pecking hens  
 Of which I owned two, three; and morning's haul  
 Of eggs belonged to me, they said, for supper.

I had a goat too, a cow and Lakshmi,  
 Gentle, big-eyed mongrel of a dog;  
 And when she died I did not feel like supper -  
 And there was Aachi, wrinkled kind old Aachi,  
 At six, she told us stories about a frog  
 In a well: food slipped down like sweetened milk and guava.

Around our house the mango shoots were pink;  
 The big bassia dropped its blossom like snow.  
 The pomegranate spun its exciting wheel  
 Against the dropcloth off palmyrah mink;  
 Between the oleander's and trumpet-lily's show  
 Pencil of grey arecanut, was wire of steel.

I was four or five, and grand-father, the poet,  
 In turban of gold and coat of black was a prince  
 Who was kind to us; he flicked the coiled whip,  
 And off we went down limestone white roads  
 Fringed with lantana eyes; from prints  
 He cut us paper dolls, with a clever snip.

Remember evenings in the theatre, his plays  
 Like Kalidasa's full of dance and song;  
 (My father once taking the leading role,  
 Great-uncle Thambar dancing with a painted face,  
 Agile as Nijinsky); his poems, a gong,  
 Stung me to listen, to the metric's whirl.

All this was <sup>home</sup> heem, and we were self-contained;  
 Our fields provided grain, tobacco, shallots:  
 Garlic, pepper, bay-leaves, ginger, saffron:  
 Yams, greens, herbs, fruits famed  
 For delicacy and flavour. The seas filled with pots  
 And nets, rang in the whole sea's kingdom.

26

This was long ago. And there was home  
Beside the Eastern harbour full of ships,  
And pretty shells on the deserted lunar beach;  
Goat's-foot underfoot, and a lyric poem  
In the screw-pine smell. The harbour lips  
Enclosed a town beyond the railroad's reach.

There was peace in Trinco jungles too:  
With leopard, deer and buffalo, I roamed  
The jungle paths with Autie, and my brothers;  
And beyond were the dead cities, the clue  
To ancient hubbub, now be-calmed,  
- All the mighty dead Anuradhapuras.

Colombo, ah, Colombo: Excrescence of Trade,  
Competition, Endeavour - the pattern did not hold;  
Chaos of many patterns, amorphous,  
- The island's harlot, and Empire's accolade  
In those days; still you were home, a mould  
That shaped me in the Western swirl and rush.

Colombo was home indeed. The silver lights  
Etched the night's dark with fauns and delicate shapes,  
The streets magical by the half-light;  
And when the moon dispelled the grey nights,  
Silver palms stood by elfin capes,  
Proud and feminine in their lissom flight.

All this we loved, my friends, Noel, Rowan,  
Tissa (a young school of friends);  
All this was heaven, until we grew,  
And learnt the dog bit, the moon was ruin,  
The gilt wore off, and all that magic lends  
Is a false perspective, with the chocolate-box view.

And there was Nuwara Eliya, the new found ~~escape~~ escape  
With a trout stream in the well-kept park;  
Upcoot, Haputale, Maskeliya knew few rivals,  
But, alas, the concrete base and rubber crepe  
Brought my village, all villages to mind, from far dark:  
Self-contained, these knew no rivals.

So on this festive day, with bells and bunting,  
I am wondering whether the hectic pace  
Will give the peace and plenty that we seek;  
Whether the brash plane and limousine affronting  
Shiva in the wooden cart, can grace,  
Or start a new tear, on the ancient cheek.

Whether it's better to adorn the top or bottom,  
To increase the village round, and soul's girth,  
Or roundly add to the world's hue and cry,  
- The bazaar's cheating and the traffic's hum;  
But, this is my island, this my native earth  
That bore me gently from a woman's sigh.

Her eye a blackbird among the tumbling bushes,  
Her lashes, the black silk of a deep night,  
Her body the pure long scarf of Laxapana, ‡  
Lights of an ocean liner in her tresses, \*  
Black tresses, filled with dark and light;  
Cry, O Cry, Namo, Namo, Matha. \*

## TAMBIMUTTU.

This poem was written for the Third Independence Day Celebrations in Ceylon.

X An Indian tree,

‡ A waterfall in Ceylon.

\* "Glory to thy Name, O Mother" (Ceylon National Song).

## Rhymes of the Times

## The middle way

"Ceylon will continue to follow the middle way in the field of international relations."—P.M. in London.

You are wise, sir, to choose the middle way.  
 But in the end we must make the choice;  
 For Freedom's sake we all will sail away.

The world's contracting into a chocolate tray,  
 And neutrality too we know must pay a price;  
 You are wise, sir, to choose the middle way.

Your task is grave and fateful, we pray  
 Your usual wisdom will quiet the impetuous voice;  
 For Freedom's sake we all will sail away.

Quiet, awhile, while atomic furies bray  
 And red anger the bowed heart annoys;  
 You are wise, sir, to choose the middle way.

Today is indeed, for man, a grey day,  
 But in the end we must make the choice;  
 For Freedom's sake we all will sail away.

Good luck, sir, and may your wisdom's sway  
 Shine in the rhetoric and noise;  
 You are wise, sir, to choose the middle way,  
 And for Freedom's sake we all will sail away.

T.



Some English pioneer saw this green bowl  
A century ago, and bought it for a song;  
He liked the climate, and the green mosses  
That sternly reminded him of home;  
He must have been a poet, I think, ~~it~~ to come here,  
To a solitary grandeur that was private, and his own.

And now, by the closely cropped and shaved gold links  
With a wooden bridge that thrusts across the stream  
Like a root; the dark-green cypresses  
With their needle leaves, and aromatic cone,  
With the suave park, and fish filled lake,  
Make a geometric and crystal landscape.

Black on red, and tan on gold, the sarees  
Sport like spring tints on the race-course;  
Sita looks pretty and petite  
And Rohini's eyes shine in the swirling light  
While Aru is totting up his bets  
And jovial club-men have morning hours.

The holiday city ~~is~~ dreams among the hills,  
And day blows cool in the fuschia bells.

N E H R U

*He is the Great Indian!*  
 You ~~Eastern~~ sir, among the world's leaders,

With Churchill, a master of the English tongue;

Your words precise as apples, ~~and~~ *every word is green* lush as cedars! —

In your Glimpses of World History, one

In pure style, with Churchill, *the Ramayana* Burke, Disraeli, Gibbon;

Teach the world's leaders to choose their words with care,

'Foresight' is not 'Appeasement', ~~or~~ *and* 'Strength', 'The Bomb',

'Indecision' is not 'Rejection', as you say, sir,

Common Wealth the goal, not only of Ceylon,

But America, England, all things that are born!

Teach us to choose right in this terrible moment,

Lover of Peace, brave voice of Torment.

*Tambimuttu.*

## PAALAI OOTHU

THERE'S a grotto in the heart  
 of the jungle  
 Where the Madonna's blue with  
 the emerald mingles.  
 Pilgrims are fervent in the nave  
 of rollicking breeze  
 Fringed by the Gothic pillars of  
 ancient trees.  
 The sky's roof protects the open-  
 air church  
 All that prays here the angels  
 bless.  
 It is faith, we know, that makes  
 eyes to flower  
 Limbs to levitate, and birds to  
 hover.  
 Stars in their courses, protect  
 the fervent wish  
 All things are real in the heart's  
 mesh.  
 This jungle sanctuary of the be-  
 lieving mind  
 Seems the jungle's vision, and all  
 else blind.  
 The well is deep, where the pil-  
 grims draw water  
 In their pots cook their hard  
 days, and the softer  
 Molluscs from China Bay. They  
 are ecstatic  
 Under thatched shed, or by the  
 tree's crutch.  
 What is unreal in this place?  
 Nothing, nothing  
 The birds make nests, and the  
 pilgrims sing.  
 Slee-eyed children are lost in  
 guava groves  
 Deserted by a planter who died,  
 long ago.  
 The Caffir settlement in, the  
 jungle hermitage  
 Where lope hunters with their  
 ancient lineage  
 Fills their eyes with envy for  
 the simple life  
 But their hearts know now a  
 new love.  
 If you go there, you'll still see,  
 my friend  
 How I carved my name on the  
 jungle-oak's BRANCH.

T.

## UPCOT

HERE by the Maskellyan range  
 The mist descends like a  
 cloak,  
 Shuts out the exotic and strange  
 And by the fire, you read a book.  
 When it lifts, rambler beans and  
 white roses  
 Round the pergola kiss and  
 twine;  
 The gay hydrangea surprises  
 You, under the sun.  
 Hills stretch out to the horizon,  
 Covered with dark curls of  
 bushes,  
 And mind's the terrible prison  
 That leaves blank all the pages.  
 Water-spouts in profusion  
 Adorn each valley and hill;  
 And the sun in his high heaven  
 Shines in a mossy pool.

T.

1951

RAMPUR.

Elephant grass is receding, and Elephants  
No longer trumpet by the cottage door,  
But the blazing sun the charming breeze  
Descend on Rampur as of yore  
The city like a warren, pocked with flies  
Sizzles with heat, and the mart's barter;  
The Prophet's Faithful dream of Medina  
Or Mecca, desert and laughter  
Long caravans from Shiraz and Baghdad  
Found rest on the flat and hot plains  
A prison-like Zenana and a palace  
Look down on this people with disdain  
The strange mosaic dwindles in the evening  
To a singular and magic pearl,  
The pearl of the minarets of Shiraz  
A rose-tinted and fiery Persian girl.



Sirdar's Wedding.  
23<sup>rd</sup> April 1952.

The Sirdar is hooked now in sweltering weather,  
May his tribe increase like old Abou Ben Adem's.  
Taj-ul-Muluk will sparkle today like champak  
And they will view the sizzling world together  
With equanimity, and find it heaven  
In hot Madras where the birds tic-toc  
In the ragged trees, and you are thunderstruck!

May the lively time and place be your chaplet  
To Crown this Kingdom of Love you have now found;  
May your gardens, children, be full of roses,  
And your paths, my dears, always sunlit.  
This is my wish, clear, tranquil and profound,  
May happiness well for you from the leaves and posies!

SRINAGAR.

Will you rest now on the mountain's breast  
Where the pencil poplars poise beside the lake?  
Where bladder-wort hearts float like houseboats  
On the dark water charged with human passion  
Whereon the bum-boat men and the sun promote  
Their ups and downs with slow precision.

Falls rock on rock and birds down to the lake  
In the trees' tracery the weaver's hand is caught.  
Tissues of electric silk and dull pashmina  
Sport what cool gardens have brought forth  
Leaves, tendrils, orioles, Kashmiri roses  
That have embroidered the distant and green North.

In the willows, a jeweller's hand is hid  
To vie with the fly-catcher and swartdragon-fly;  
Kind-fishers have caught the green lake  
Pressed her in between the zaffran and rye  
Roses grow on the pashmina shawls  
And the high Himalayas hoists up the sky.

=====

## Shrimati Dineshnandini Dalmia

[Shrimati Dineshnandini Dalmia is a well-known Hindi poetess, who has published a dozen volumes of prose-lyrics and verse. A critic of note has described them as "authentic, set in the Indian mood and tradition, precise in the manner of Mohammed Iqbal rather than in the style of Tagore". The sequence of poems we give here has been translated by Tambimuttu, former editor of "Poetry London".]

### I

O Weaver of Garlands, do not pierce these half-blown blossoms,  
Because the kiss of bees has soiled them;  
Do not put the soft green grasses in my basket  
Because the drops of dew have made them wet;  
My God will not accept these Bel-leaves also,  
Because the taint of air pervades them;  
My deity needs virgin gifts;  
Flower-gatherer, do not pierce these bakul-buds.

### II

The stars went out, one by one, yet day broke not,  
In the blind court-yard of old age, Life flickered;  
Obscene shadow-pictures of fleeting youth flashed across  
The swart screen of death; frightening the dying man.  
Bright streaks of the future showed in the dreaming eyes of the  
past;

The flickering "dipak" went out,

The stars went out,

there was no end tonight.

## III

If I find you in the turgid hours of empty youth,  
 I'll chain the sun, and keep it hid for aeons in the net of my saree;  
 I'll make the world sleep, till I can forget the pain of separation:  
 Scatter hungry Death behind the curtain of the un-resolved,  
 —Nourish her on the hot blood of my heart.  
 If I own you, just once, I will renew the crooked ways of the  
 Creator,  
 Become the puzzle, myself!

## IV

Will the world forget your beauty that enchants the three worlds,  
 holy memories! or my deep and boundless love—  
 You on heavenly Ganges' bosom, in Indra's garden floating, blue  
 lotus!  
 And I its sandal-scented breeze, stricken liquid shadow, and light's  
 broken ray

When in the full-blown evening, the sun on mountain-tops  
 Sets loose torrents of light;  
 Folds the oriole of rays in the apron of sky;  
 When the lotus, closing aromatic petals, is quiescent on the still  
 waters of the tank after the day's heat  
 When the peacock, that expert dancer among birds, weaves rain-  
 bow colours of sunset in the crescent-eyes of its tail-feathers,  
 Feels drowsy, seeks rest on a high branch, thick with leaves;  
 Then,  
 My love, coming softly, hide yourself between my breasts,  
 Where your worn-out soul and scorched body  
 Shall find renewal and peace  
 Up to the rising of the gold sun.

## VI

Idol! Love me, or spurn me,  
 Your worship is my creed, to sing your praise in the assembly of  
 poets, my calling,  
 Your beauty is the lamp of my "Shiva-laya".  
 To me, you are the light Moses saw on Horab's Mount,  
 Your slavery, the eternal lease-deed of my luck;  
 To follow in your footsteps is my Kashi and Brindaban, my Mecca  
 and my Medina:  
 To water your garden with the life-stream of my heart, my wish;  
 To die in dedication to your memory, laughing, my highest mark  
 of distinction!  
 Idol, love me, or spurn me....



## VII

How does my Heart-beat live in your absence?  
 The stars catch fire without oil;  
 Anxiety burns without a heaped-up pyre,  
 Blazing death-fires extinguish without dousing,  
 And beautiful subtle creation goes on, without substance;  
 The programme of death works according to the rules,  
 Though the prompter remains unseen;  
 And so persists my Heart-beat without you.

## VIII

Before the gates of Nanda's palace, Vrishnabanu's daughter paused  
 and prayed:

"O sleeping world's protecting tusk-ers of the ten directions  
 That sweet couch protect:  
 Resting on which, my infatuated love dreams of me!"

## IX

Alas! On the princess' tomb now,  
 Earth but the soft grass and flowers offers;  
 The breeze presents the several perfumes  
 And moon and stars only, light the lamps  
 —And heaven weeps tears of dew.

## X

"Who was she—Dinesh?"  
 When the world ages, someone may ask.  
 The touching, quiet beauty of centuries will trip in and vanish,  
 And free manhood, infinite youth, and palsied age will disappear  
 shyly;  
 But bright love's scented ray, world's broken, divine existence will  
 suffuse with colour;  
 Then, when the world ages, someone may ask  
 "Who was she—Dinesh?"

## D E I T Y

Mysterious ayoha, ayoha

Without lips, hearts or membranes

On the high mountain tops:

Eating your passion smoothly

Like oil, nuts, <sup>gaps</sup> ~~lips~~, oranges.

The heart is a gape the breezes enter

With the running water and the best of tides —

On barren shore, the winding

~~Running~~

~~Running~~ stair of white sand to somewhere.

Fill the valleys with song and smother

The hearts, lakes, stars with diamonds

— Old is your sacred song.

## THE ONLY REALITY

The holy loves that flower in the dark  
Subside into the wet jewels of night  
Quietly and without much fuss.

The trains come and go like visitors  
To an open house all day,  
With great commotion.

The bustle in our hooded hearts  
The splitting of the city and the vibration  
are parrallel and the same.

The quiet pool lies where reeds bend  
The sun flow  
And the rooms are entered.

*Tamara*

## THE SPREADING CROSS.

Where, where will we find us after wreck,  
 Deep river, sand or shallow?  
 After the city is spslain and the thin laughter  
 Of mouldy bone echoing in corners; after swallow  
 Of stick and stone are mixed in slaughter;  
 After the memories, memorials— and after  
 Where, will we find us after wreck?

After the burst of treaties and brute splendour  
 Loud on the slaughter bleeding empty stone;  
 When our sharp loves are blunted like night  
 Forking nowhere, and wind distractedly pulls bone from bone,  
 When the pulse is slow and thorned, the lips tight  
 And angry fires are loading another fight  
 Where will we find us after wreck?

The clouds of fear are silently assembled above  
 this night

To disappear in soft immersion in the cavern heart.

The seven-voiced guns are talking fast again  
 And again and again the planes return to London  
 The start

This of the spreading cross and pain;



But when the floods come and doves return  
Where will we find us after wreck?

A simple book of his, the awful other's want,  
A little mercy on the clean surgeon's knife  
Would have avoided all this. Who can say?  
Today the cars of war run only when life  
Is stranded for reason. And when the day  
Of reckoning descends and someone, perhaps he,  
the other has to pay —

Where will we find us after wreck?

Life is not single or double but like an ocean  
Drawn round the earth on meeting floors.  
(Movement in the local place disturbs the love-beds all)  
Hunger and anger are not indigenous but spread like  
sores  
Across the earth from Washington to Calcutta.  
But when the pall  
Of smoke and ~~timidity~~ lies is lifted and the  
deceivers fall, all,  
Where will we find us after wreck?

These are the things we must think of. Tonight  
the bowl air is taut.

The points of flame about the plane are  
two angers meeting;

But they will break each other

And our hot anger dying

What we must love or fight or hate about

Is when the bombs and bands are ushered out

Where O where will we find us after wreck?

---

ocean

beds all

like

ta.

the

## Colombo Harbour

Falls the darkness on this patch of water,  
 With a roar of winches and the engines drumming,  
 People setting out for far places  
 Come here to roost, and faster  
 The engines hum, and with their groning  
 Is born a new sea laughter.

The bum-boats have carried a man's dreams  
 For thirty years, on this oily water,  
 The spidery masts got caught in his hair,  
 His eyes laced with rigging and ship-beams;  
 With life's eternal compromise and barter  
 In 900 B.C. he was still our harbour.

And so they tack and sail and go away,  
 Or drown from this spot, that is the world's and ours.  
 And when eyes dream of other islands,  
 Lay your sleeping head here, and stay  
 A while; think Colombo Harbour's  
 Our own, with sound and silence.

Kortebom-on-the-Hill was a childhood symbol  
 Of deep sea ships and men, the flying fish:  
 Tonight her strong lights reminds the voyagers  
 Of home, the eyes, that were brown and simple.  
 The drumming ships float in the harbour dish.  
 A thousand fingers comb the palm's tresses.

---

## Colombo Harbour

Falls the darkness on this patch of water,  
 With a roar of winches and the engines drumming,  
 People setting out for far places  
 Come here to roost, and faster  
 The engines hum, and with their growling  
 Is born a new sea laughter.

The bum-boats have carried a man's dreams  
 For thirty years, on this oily water,  
 The spidery masts got caught in his hair,  
 His eyes laced with rigging and ship-beans;  
 With life's eternal compromise and barter  
 In 900 B.C. he was still our harbour.

And so they tack and sail and go away,  
 Or drown from this spot, that is the world's and ours.  
 And when eyes dream of other islands,  
 Lay your sleeping head here, and stay  
 A while; think Colombo Harbour's  
 Our own, with sound and silence.

Kortenaar-on-the-Hill was a childhood symbol  
 Of deep sea ships and men, the flying fish:  
 Tonight her strong lights reminds the voyagers  
 Of home, the eyes, that were brown and simple.  
 The drumming ships float in the harbour dish.  
 A thousand fingers comb the palm's tresses.



ATCHUVELY For My Grandfather.

Here the silver head dreamed of the hoopoe  
 In a perfect sonnet for his darling's praise  
 In her lemon arms thrust the jujube and mango,  
 The shir's plenty and ancestral grace;  
 Plucked her the magic islands of the West,  
 Kays, Hammenhiel, all those places  
 Long disappeared now, in the sea's depths.  
 Where starfish with the turtle races.  
 Clattered the passionate stars over Atchuvety,  
 His heart beat faster in each sheer song:  
 The Thrush entered his heart, with the shimmering  
 neem tree

And now he's gone the lanes his secret keep,  
 His moods beat down shadowy and strong,  
 And in the bassia grove the Orioles weep.

POLONNARUWA.

When there is no more to write, it is best to sleep  
 There is no rest, no hand-shakes, weep, weep  
 As the tired breezes round the lattice creep  
 And the pool wears out the stone and nerves break,  
 A heart has a history, like this stone place  
 Dreaming Polonnarwa give us your great peace.  
 Speak, speak, of the warm light in each face  
 That blessed you, my city, my beautiful one,  
 My flowers of stone, dear city, when you alone  
 Gave to the child this stupa, this pillar, this Siva  
 Sleep, sleep, with your broken eye, and have long rest  
 And hold the ~~fast~~ birds fast in your green nest.  
 Fast.

MANIPAL.

To many, Manipal is but a name  
 Where their ancestors killed and brought forth  
 Where old houses with broad verandahs  
 Multiplied the families of great worth:  
 Where they studied 'Maniyampathiyar Santhathi Mural'  
 To praise the ante-cedents of each birth

Cultivated, conservative, progressive,  
 Beyond their time and condition:

The scholar Gnanaprakasam, the Mathers.

The greatness of Coomaraswamy at Boston,  
 Ramanathan, Arunachalam, the statesmen;  
 Emigrants to Malaya, France, or London

Something precious was born in Manipal  
 Behind the stone walls and thatch fences:  
 Bold as sparrows, bright-eyed as robins,  
 Whole and undivided, their fancies.  
 They found order under the mind's  
 Precise and glittering lenses.

So let us go down to antique Manipal  
 The spring of so much good endeavour;  
 Where the peacock flower was all flame and golden.  
 And there were peacocks once in that shady bower  
 Where silk rustled, and be-jewelled hands  
 Blessed you and stole you for ever.

Villanelle for the old year.

The old year's dying on our native hills,  
 Remember your gala night at the Golden Fawn?  
 It is the memory, the memory remains and kills.  
 The memory fails and the passion chills,  
 And a new year falters now someone has gone,  
 The old year's dying on our native hills.

Pictures are fading, the worn heart mills  
 Now the old days have swiftly flown;  
 It is the memory, the memory remains and kills  
 It is the crowded story that stills  
 The bowed head and the crimsoning dawn  
 The old year's dying on our native hills

The year's memories sing in silver hills  
 Over the mind's quiet secluded lawn:  
 It is the memory, the memory remains and kills  
 And grateful too for the happy times, the thrills  
 The weathers, the loving and the corn;  
 The old year's dying on our native hills  
 It is ~~the~~ the memory, the memory remains and kills.

## Villanelle

We won't find peace in the language of war or threats.  
Jawaharlal Nehru.

We won't find peace in the language of war,  
I have seen homes on fire like gorse;  
We live today under an evil star:

September 'Thirty Nine heard the passions roar,  
Friends faded and passed with <sup>the</sup> autumn rose;  
We won't find peace in the language of war.

They dropped down dead in the crowded bar  
The bomb's fierce message was sure and terse;  
We won't find peace in the language of war

All was in flame, blood, hair and tar,  
And lovers knew what death owes;  
We live today under an evil star.

Dunkirk, Warsaw, Arnhem, brave Malta,  
Remember all this and worse;  
We won't find peace in the language of war:  
We live today under an evil star.



Horton Place.

Here where hands are jewelled, and the pace faster,  
 High walls protect you from sudden disaster.  
 The evening face is becalmed on the Stud Book  
 And painted eyes fix you with a bold look,  
 On the shaved lawn, the enamelled flower pots,  
 Check-by-jowl with Mother's noisy ducks,  
 Spark through evening gloom the patch-work scene,  
 And under the porch sits an amazing limousine  
 Among the brass jardinières Mother's laughter tinkles,  
 And the girls are pretty in their plastic wimples,  
 Son's been wonderful this month at cricket,  
 And Father dreams of Dulcep, Hobbs and Ranjit,  
 Dreams of Kent and hops, and an English morning  
 When the pitch was soft, his strokes-a-Worrell's adorning  
 When life, was play according to the book's rules,  
 And young days sparkled, glowed like bright jewels.  
 Horton Place, today is gay with his laughter,  
 He has gone, with the flowers; (but) sunbirds;  
 But with his love murmur.

After a death.

He is someone I never met  
 A streak in the sky that flushed and passed  
 Cypress and myrtle now bind his head  
 He is at rest.  
 From the striving and struggle, a heart stood still  
 His fires burn, still in the native wood;  
 The equable voice will sound no more  
 Remember the good.  
 And so the sea-spume and roars vanish  
 And the memory remains,  
 All right endeavour is lasting  
 Blessed by the ruins.

Malte

In Bombay, where the small shadows creep  
 To Salsette Island which reminds me of Ceylon,  
 There lies Malte, the most perfect country  
 Wedded in bliss to sea-mews, sun and song  
 All night long, the sea-swell in her eyes,  
 Speaks of merchants, princes, ships  
 The magic of natural peaceful waters  
 And the warm bays of her Indian lips.  
 Under the sun, all things are vernal  
 - Malte ~~dreams~~ in the criss-cross light  
 A haven of dark-eyed, heaving waters,  
 And the delight of my wondering eyes.

The Writer

He is the black song that will trouble  
 The bround acres to a double flow,  
 Gold, corn, iron, all that the land yields  
 All that is musical and vernal, all that binds and sets loose  
 Sets stock for winter and for summer pleasure,  
 Setting the fine-spun necklace of bird sound on the dark throat  
 And in the black braided hair the vermillion of his lips,  
 Eyes, arms, nostrills, the finger-tips assaying  
 The impossible and the feasible feats  
 Straight cypress in the exotic setting  
 Flamboyante and jessamine assailing the startled eyes;  
 In the shapeless growth of sudden tropic life,  
 In the formlessness, a low insistent note  
 Banging the god in, his quiver full of bright steel  
 His loins of vibration and his eyes of vengeance:

Spawn of God, poet, scattered to the four winds  
 Of the Crucifix! You swell the bush, the rock and the burn,  
 — Forever lonely.

---

### Reveal Her

Reveal her, raze her flat to the ground  
 The white kernel rigid to the teeth.  
 And the airs of heaven drift into the hole  
 The hole of heaven.

Heaven is in our faces, blowing,  
 With the slap and drift of water.  
 Dull on the smooth stone  
 Eaten with passion.

Heaven is where the colours cross  
 And the waters meet.  
 Drift, drift into the water  
 Where the roles mix.

The swallow tumbles into the pool  
And the willows kiss.

Heaven is where the angels wink  
And tents are entered strongly.

---



When to the sessions of sweet silent thought  
I summon up remembrance of things past,  
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,  
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste;

Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,  
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,  
And weep afresh love's long since-cancell'd woe,  
And moan the expense of many a vanish'd sight.

Then can I grieve at grievances forgone,  
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er  
The sad account of fore-bemoan'd moan  
Which I new pay as if not paid before:

—But if the while I think on thee, dear Friend,  
All losses are restored and sorrows end.

W. Shakespeare

CORPUS CHRISTI CAROL

Lullay, Lullay, Lullay, Lullay,  
The falcon hath borne my make away

He bore him up, he bore him down  
And bore him into an orchard brown.

In that orchard there was an hall,  
That was hangéd with purple and pall.

And in that hall there was a bed;  
It was hangéd with gold so red.

And there in that bed there lieth a knight,  
His ~~xxxxxxxx~~ wounde is bleeding day and night.

By that bed's side there kneeleth a may,  
And she weepeth both night and day.

And by that bed's side there standeth a stone  
Corpus Christi written thereon.

## C A N N A

There was a day when you were in love,  
And the canna heads came tumbling down;  
There was a day when the tempestuous heart  
Was a riot of colour, in the drab town;  
And as they vanished, bright colours fading,  
Those trellised eyes faded and drowned.

Like rich cloths, and hair, fading,  
And ocean liner, over the sky line,  
Days, hands, lips vanished;  
There was nothing there that was mine,  
The canna grew again in the same bed,  
Dear flesh, beautiful as wine.

So fill the gardens with the tumble of canna,  
Ring the tinted heads, by the gold coast,  
- Straight assegai of the passionate garden,  
Intifcate growth of the heart's thirst;  
The fulfilment and the resurrection  
Of the unlucky, and the lost.

Tambimuttu

## J A F F N A

Here by toddy roots, the Golden Oriole  
Prints yellow tracks across the zig-zag fences.  
The heart slumbers in the heat, with the lorikset,  
And mind's bereft of all extravagant fancies;  
Her velvet eye in the ancient Walauna %  
Fondles a paper rose with her soft glances.

Home, home, where is it you started?  
Did you grow with the coral under Kayts,  
Streak with wild horses on Delft isle  
Flower in the crystal, passionless nights?  
Lone by strange Fort Hammenhiel  
Unravel the world's wrongs and rights?

From northernmost Point Pedro, the spanking  
North-Easter encircles Jaffna's tulips -  
Dusty tulip-trees of the the maiden,  
To many their childhood toy and julep!  
Remember the fruit that were the play-tops  
Underneath the old school-house's burlap?

Flat as a table-top, the landscape;  
Gothic cathedrals of palmyrahs, doves.  
Salt estuaries with heron and flamingo  
And pensive stork that memory adores;  
All this, Jaffna, and more, you are to them,  
Sprung in your red earth and bird-filled groves.

Tambimuttu

% manor house.

IN THE COUNTRY

In the eyelids' shade the rocks grow  
Into the other rock I've left behind  
Manhattan, Manhattan  
Where the cocks grow and the rocks rock  
The baby to sleep.

TAMBIMUTTU

6.v.64



HARI SRIVASTAVA

The following poem Tambi wrote and composed hurriedly in the office of the Boat House Club, Nainital, and typed it out on its typewriter, and presented it to me on the occasion of my thirty-fourth birthday on 24th July, 1952.

NAINITAL

(FOR HARI, ON HIS THIRTY-FOURTH BIRTHDAY)

None of us can escape magic; from time to time  
The forest opens into a clear lake,  
With boats and youths, and the heart opens  
Into a single flower, the girl can pluck.  
Here at Naini Tal where I have found peace  
On the swan's breast, and the lit rooms of her eyes,  
I have found this, that suddenly the mist lifts,  
And the lake stretches intricate in the hills' maze.

A little love from time to time breaks through  
The rough, furry bud, and the thick jungle;  
Plummeting birds take the leafy citadel  
And honey bees with the thunderous flowers mingle;  
The whorled orchid asserts the wonderful,  
Marries the heart that's been difficult and single:  
Drip-drop all feeling, colours, scents  
Into a bright cup, that's now full.

To get here and to claim Naini Tal  
As you would take a child to your breast,  
To find the route that's both direct and certain,  
To Great Northern Road to the peaceful beck and fell,  
Is not so easy as we have heard told,  
A simple remedy for our fears, pains and ills.

Remember Caliban in Regent's Park  
One summer evening, when Kamala was the goal,  
The tortured face of the actor, and his rough clothes,  
The servant-monster of a dark time;  
Earth-spirit with the dark yearning voice,  
Born of the split rock, and spilt wine.

The alcohol fumes that Stewart survived  
From colourful India to his stark London:  
The revolving doors of 'The Wheatsheaf' that let in  
The weak and the ponderous, or the steadily wasting;  
All those that Caliban blessed, who in his torment  
Told us he woke only to cry, and to dream again.

Those were times we can never forget,  
When the Casino's girls were lovelies, Sita an angel;  
When the drum of the Caribbean swirled the beautiful dancers  
And London's snow was a beating white gull;  
Against the drop-cloth of lit-up Piccadilly  
Fell the beauty and the weariness in hand-fulls.

That was the old magic that gilded  
The war-torn faces and the tumbled brick,  
When we celebrated a wedding, or your birthday  
With a pub-crawl, a curry and a flick;  
Out-growing these, we booked a brand new office  
And wondered which marvellous button would do the trick.

That was the eager, uncertain age when tumbling  
In the hay, or starting a fire was delicious;  
When chiffon rustled in the throbbing rooms  
And youthful laughter burst in rosettes and stars:  
Shot the midnight with sparkling lips and spangles  
Hung the moon's cap on the pine's burrs.

Then the laughter tarnished and photos faded,  
With the smart picnics and woodland rambles;  
Auden's slick statements lacked heart,  
And a Celt's sudden passion seemed important;  
Real with the blood's heat and brambles,  
It made us pause, and have our doubts.

So on this 34th birthday at Naini Tal  
Among these sonorous hills and delicate willows,  
I hope a sudden light and a new beginning will surprise you,  
Cover your darling's eyes and bright hair with kisses;  
On the broad rippling lake the silver yachts float,  
So may you trim and launch your dream-boats.

Tambimuttu

(Nainital, India - 24 July, 1952)

That was the old magic that gilded  
The war-torn faces and the tumbled brick,  
When we celebrated a wedding, or your birthday  
With a pub-crawl, a curry and a flick;  
Out-growing these, we booked a brand new office  
And wondered which marvellous button would do the trick.

That was the eager, uncertain age when tumbling  
In the hay, or starting a fire was delicious;  
When chiffon rustled in the throbbing rooms  
And youthful laughter burst in rosettes and stars:  
Shot the midnight with sparkling lips and spangles  
Hung the moon's cap on the pine's burrs.

Then the laughter tarnished and photos faded,  
With the smart picnics and woodland rambles;  
Auden's slick statements lacked heart,  
And a Celt's sudden passion seemed important;  
Real with the blood's heat and brambles,  
It made us pause, and have our doubts.

So on this 34th birthday at Naini Tal  
Among these sonorous hills and delicate willows,  
I hope a sudden light and a new beginning will surprise you,  
Cover your darling's eyes and bright hair with kisses;  
On the broad rippling lake the silver yachts float,  
So may you trim and launch your dream-boats.

Tambimuttu

(Nainital, India - 24 July, 1952)



## A MAP OF CEYLON

This is a Map of Ceylon to take with you,  
Wherever you go, and near to your heart;  
Wherever wells have dried, and wishes no longer  
Chime with the clear beat;  
Each raiding change makes day colder,  
Each new departure, brings you where you started.

We begin at first with the hard growth of pines,  
-Cockspur Thorn on the barren heath;  
Where the rock breaks, the Tiger's Claw  
Offers cabre-gays useless fruit;  
Moom-Plains they are called; Love's-Cross  
With dry lichen and moss is lost.

And then the sudden fury of the rains  
Lashed the hot eyes among the blue hills;  
The rivers were in spate and the hills' eyes-  
Ramboda, Laxapana- with butterflies was full;  
Dropped down into the Ganga's throat,  
To feed the salt birds and the shore's gulls.

Ceylon is always the map on your palm, look!  
Burnt with the sun's needles and action's desiring;  
That one, now, is the Mount of Adam,  
And this, the river, named the Great One;  
Beyond the lines of luck and ill-luck, conspiring,  
These are the things, in the end, that will bring you home.

EPITHALAMION FOR HANKEP AND ZAHRA

Now, at last, the splendid rain is falling  
And the hungry earth is spoiled with kisses  
The bird of sleep has fallen on her eye  
With its seven breast and dusky wings;  
And he, no longer, has his rambling wishes  
The joining rain has nestled in his eye.

Oh bless the summer of this sapling country  
And praise the marriage of tangle, corn and fern;  
In every well there is a reflection,  
In every tangled heart a haft for entry;  
Now you have proved it, dears, my notions learn,  
In time, to imitate your perfection.

Tender face of the wife, Zahra  
Slim cithara, chiming with bird and sandalwood,  
In your black hair you secreted the waterfall,  
Stole the butterfly sunlight from the branches;  
Your sun-bathed body, my dear, is India,  
In your present love I wish you as fierce a hunger.

Now as monsoon drops on topside cottage path  
And strange new shafts of light carve a new world race,  
Loves hammer rings on the mountain-head;  
There is glory in each bird-breast.  
And I send you my wishes and my praise,  
For only dreaming and the love, is actual.

## CLOSENBURG

A bit further down, it's land's end;  
Here on the teasing, curving beach of Galle,  
Leaping whitely and serenely southwards,  
Sang a trader and marauder like a gull  
Settled for a while on this rocky escarpment,  
Grubbing for spices, ivory and jewels.

The humbler traffic of the beach, the rock-crabs  
Like spiders, starfish, and the stranded jelly;  
Shells, like banyan flowers and melon seeds,  
And stronger tints on the cunch's belly  
Fleunt as bright a bazaar for the bathers;  
The tepid sea's an acid-green like nelli.

The viridian palms frame castellated Closenburz -  
The sea-salt dress of a fierce old sea captain;  
The ding-dong breeze tears through enormous windows  
To a timbered hall lined with coral and gypsum.  
Sheer drop of rockface to the white-lace water  
Is a rug, squat Closenburgis wrapped in.

On the sea's apple, far off, a buggalow  
Is a faint smudge on the horizon's line.  
The mind's lake ripples with yachts and silver ships,  
And the heart wishes the round world were mine,  
To toss to you across the apple water,  
Mix your darling, shy, wide eyes with mine.

## JAFFNA

Here by toddy roots, the Golden Oriole  
Prints yellow tracks across the zig-zag fences.  
The heart slumbers in the heat, with the lorikeet,  
And mind's bereft of all extravagant fancies;  
Her velvet eye in the ancient palauva  
Fondles a paper rose with her soft glances.

Home, home, where is it you started?  
Did you grow with the coral under Kayts,  
Streak with wild horses on Delft isle  
Flower in the crystal, passionless nights?  
Lone by strange Fort Hammenhiel  
Unravel the world's wrongs and rights?

From Northernmost Point Pedro, the spanking  
North-Easter encircles Jaffna's tulips-  
Dusty tulip-trees of the maidan,  
To many their childhood toy and julep!  
Remember the fruit that were the play tops  
Underneath the old school-house's burlap?

Flat as a table-top, the landscape;  
Gothic cathedrals of palayraks, doves.  
Salt estuaries with heron and flamingo  
And pensive stork that memory adores;  
All this, Jaffna, and more, you are to these,  
Sprung in your red earth and bird-filled groves.



SH KINE IN THE JUNGLE; MADHU

Emblem of faith, set in the sun wounded wood  
Of red palu, and longan, testing like skinned grape;  
Here the faithful think of eternal good  
And bathe in a river full of water lilies.  
The journey was full of dust and flies,  
And nights haunted with mutterings and leopard's rear,  
But by the camp-fires they said their beads  
And dined well off the jungle plum and wild boar;  
And arrived at Madhu, in the jungle's recesses,  
Found the journey had been good and revealing:  
What it is the search and trouble blesses,  
What binds the heart, and what the wood-nymphs bring.

## KANDY LAKE

It's peaceful here, by the constructed lake.  
Buildings sit on the water, and  
ripples break  
On an ornamental wall pierced with triangles,  
Which declare it Kandyan. Jingles  
Of fussy trees, make a bright border,  
And the stentorian cabbage-palm  
routs the disorder.  
Cassia's candelabra hang yellow,  
and the rain tree  
Thrusts its coral widders at the powder-blue sky.  
The garden at the southern  
end is a Persian carpet.  
Rare like cobra's diamond, and  
famous as a song-hit.  
I envy these nut-brown children  
tumbling down the red road.  
Their school must be near heaven,  
on the sloping hills side.  
Slender as the lake's reeds, and  
tense like the sun's heat,  
This is the elfin kingdom, they inherit.  
They say sloe-eyed princesses  
once dreamed on that island,  
And also a mother drowned there,  
quite out of mind.  
Dark and light, the waters, their  
ancient secrets keep,  
Surface moves and ripples on the  
edge of sleep.

NAINI TAL

(For Hari, on his thirty-fourth birthday)

None of us can escape magic; from time to time  
The forest opens into a clear lake  
With boats and youths, and the heart opens  
Into a single flower, the girl can pluck.  
Hers at Naini Tal where I have found peace  
on the swan's breast, and the lit rooms of her eyes,  
I have found this, that suddenly the mist lifts,  
And the lake stretches intricate in the hills maze.

A little love from time to time breaks through  
The rough, furry bud, and the thick jungle;  
Plummeting birds take the leafy citadel,  
And honey bees with the thunderous flowers mingle;  
The whorled orchid asserts the wonderful,  
Marries the heart that's been difficult and single:  
Drip-drop all feeling, colours, scents  
Into a bright cup, that's now full.

To get here, and to claim Naini Tal,  
As you would take a child to your breast,  
To find the route that's both direct and certain,  
The Great Northern Road to the peaceful beck and fell,  
Is not so easy as we have heard told,  
A simple remedy for our fears and ills.

Remember meeting Caliban in Regent's Park  
One summer evening, when Hamlet was the goal;  
The tortured face of the actor, and his rough clothes,  
The servant-monster of a dark time;  
Earth-spirit with the dark yearning voice,  
Born of the split rock, and spilt wine.

The alcohol fumes that Stewart survived  
From his colourful India to his stark London;  
The revolving doors of "The Wheatsheaf" that let in  
The weak and the Ponderous, or the steadily wasting;  
All those that Caliban blessed, who in his torment  
Told us he woke only to cry, and to dream again.

Those were times we can never forget,  
When the Casino's girl's were 'lovelies', Sita an angel;  
When the drum of 'The Caribbean' swirled the beautiful dancers,  
And London's snow was a beating white gull;  
Against the drop-cloth of lit-up Piccadilly,  
Fell the weariness and beauty in hand-fulls.

That was the old magic that gilded  
The war-torn faces and the tumbled brick;  
When we celebrated a wedding, or your birthday,  
With a pub-crawl, a curry and a flick;  
Out-growing these, we booked a brand new office  
And wondered which marvellous button would do the trick.

That was the eager, uncertain age when tumbling  
 In the hay, or starting a fire was delicious;  
 When chiffon rustled in the throbbing rooms,  
 And youthful laughter burst in rosettes and stars:  
 Shot the midnight with sparkling lips and spangles  
 Hung the moon's cap on the pine's burrs.

Then the laughter tarnished and photos faded,  
 With the smart picnics and woodland rambles;  
 Auden's slick statements lacked heart,  
 And a Celt's sudden passion seemed important;  
 Real with the blood's heat and brambles,  
 It made us pause, and have our doubts.

So on this thirty-fourth birthday at Naini Tal  
 Among the sonorous hills and delicate willows,  
 I hope a sudden light and the new beginning will surprise you,  
 Cover your darling's hair and bright eyes with kisses;  
 On the rippling broad lake the silver yachts float,  
 So may you trim add launch your dream boats.

% H imalayan resort.



PAALAI OOTHU

There's a grotto in the heart  
of the jungle  
Where the Madonna's blue with  
the emerald mingles.  
Pilgrims are fervent in the nave  
of rollicking breeze  
Fringed by the Gothic pillars of ancient trees.  
The sky's roof protects the open-air church  
All that prays here the angels bless.  
It is faith, we know, that makes  
eyes to flower  
Limbs to levitate, and birds to hover.  
Stars in their courses, protect  
the fervent wish  
All things are real in the heart's mesh.  
This jungle sanctuary of the believing mind  
Seems the jungle's vision, and all else blind.  
The well is deep, where the pilgrims draw water  
And in their pots cook their hard days, and the softer  
Molluscs from China Bay.  
They are ecstatic  
Under thatched shed, or by the tree's crutch.  
What is unreal in this place?  
Nothing, nothing  
The birds make nests, and the pilgrims sing.  
Blue-eyed children are lost in guava groves  
Deserted by a planter who died, long ago.  
The Gaffir settlement in the jungle hermitage  
Where lope hunters with their ancient lineage  
Fills their eyes with envy for the simple life  
But their hearts know now a new love.  
If you go there, you'll still see, my friend  
How I carved my name on the jungle-oak's trunk.

UPCOT

Here by the Maskeliyan range  
The mist descends like a cloak,

Shuts out the exotic and strange  
And by the fire, you read a book.  
When it lifts, rambler beans and white roses

Round the pergola kiss and twine;

The gay hydrangea surprises  
You, under the sun.

Hills stretch out to the horizon,  
Covered with dark curls of bushes,

And mind's the terrible prison  
That leaves blank all the pages.  
Water-sprouts in profusion  
Adorn each valley and hill;

And the sun in his high heaven  
Shines in a mossy pool.

## SRINAGAR

Will you rest now on the mountain's breast  
Where pencil poplars poise beside the lake?  
Where bladder-wort hearts float like the houseboats  
On dark water charged with human passion  
Whereon the bum-boat men and sun promote  
Their ups and downs with a slow precision.

Falls rock on rock and birds down go the lake  
In the trees' tracery the weaver's hand is caught.  
Tissues of electric silk and dull pashmina  
Sport what cool gardens have brought forth  
Leaves, tendrils, orioles, Kashmiri roses  
Embroidering the distant and green North.

In the willows, a jeweller's hand is hid  
To vie with the fly-catcher and swart dragon-fly:  
Kind-fishers have caught the green lake  
Caught her between the zaffron and rye  
Roses grow on the pashmina shawls  
And high the Himalayas hoist up the splendid sky.

## COLUMBO HARBOR

Falls the darkness on this pathh of water,  
With a roar of winches and the engines drumming,  
People setting out for far places  
Come here to roost, and faster  
The eng nes hum, and with their groaning  
Is born a new sea laughter.

The bus-boats have carried a man's dreams  
For thirty years, on this oily water,  
The spidery masts got caught in his hair,  
His eyes laced with signal and ship-beans;  
With life's eternal compromise and barter  
In 900 B.C. she was still our harbor.

And so they tack and sail and go away,  
Or drown from this spot, that is the world's and ours.  
And when eyes dream of other islands,  
Lay your sleepin g head here, and stay  
Awhile; think, Columbo Harbor's  
Our own, with sound and silence.

Korteboom-on-the-Hill was a childhood symbol  
Of deep sea ships and sea, the flying fish:  
Tonight her strung lights reminds the voyagers  
Of home, the eyes, that were brown and simple  
The drumming ships float in the harbour dish.  
A thousand fingers comb the palm's tresses.



## POLONNARUMA

When there is no more to write, it is best to sleep  
There is no rest, no hand-shakes, weep, weep  
As the tired breezes round the lattice creep  
And the pool wears out the stone and nerves break  
A heart has a history, like this ~~stone~~ place  
Dreaming Polonnarwa give us your great peace.  
Speak, speak of the warm light in each face  
That blessed you, my city, my beautiful one,  
My flowers of stone, dear city, when you alone  
Gave to the child this stupa, this pillar, this Siva  
Sleep, sleep, with your broken eye, and have long rest  
And hold the frail birds fast in your green nest.

ATCHUVELY

(For my grandfather, Pulavar S. Vembimuttu Pillai )

Here the silver head dreamed of the hoopoe  
In a perfect sonnet for his darlings praise  
In her lemon arms thrust the jujuba and mango,  
The shire's plenty and ancestral grace;

Plucked her the magic islands of the West,  
Rayts, Harnenhiel, all those places  
Long disappeared now, in the seas depths  
Where starfish with the turtle races  
Clattered the passionate stars over Atchuvely,  
His heart beat faster in each cheer song:  
The thrush entered his heart, with the shimmering  
moon tree.

And now he's gone the lanes his secret keep,  
His woods best down, shadowy and strong,  
And in the bassia grove the orioles weep.

Pine-woods, fish in the lakes  
Of Yaddo, Sarataga, criss-cross  
In my unquiet mind  
With your second birthday  
My daughter.

The card is very small, the one I saved for you  
In these store-less, diffident woods:  
But ghosted on its sky, by a spring wind  
- Discloser of inexpressibles -  
See! A singular rose erects its slender neck  
From its collar of green leaves!

The lips are warm and open, and its whirligig head  
Reminds me of all the funny coiffures you affect.  
It's a rose of many moods and faces, you'll see  
And that's exactly how you seem to me.

TAMBIMUTTU

*I send you a carbon copy since the types  
get clogged up when I make extra copies.*

*Yaddo,  
Saratoga Springs  
New York.*



POSTCARD FOR SHAKUNTALA, setat.2

Pine-woods, fish in the lakes  
Of Yaddo, Sarataga, criss-cross  
In my unquiet mind  
With your second birthday  
My daughter.

The card is very small, the one I saved for you  
In these store-less, diffident woods;  
But ghosted on its sky, by a spring wind  
- Discloser of inexpressibles -  
See! A singular rose erects its slender neck  
From its collar of green leaves!

The lips are warm and open, and its whirligig head  
Reminds me of all the funny coiffures you affect.  
It's a rose of many moods and faces, you'll see  
And that's exactly how you seem to me.

TAMBIMUTTU



POSTCARD FOR SHAKUNTALA, setat.2

Pine-woods, fish in the lakes  
Of Yaddo, Sarataga, criss-cross  
In my unquiet mind  
With your second birthday  
My daughter.

The card is very small, the one I saved for you  
In these store-less, diffident woods;  
But ghosted on its sky, by a spring wind  
- Discloser of inexpressibles -  
See! A singular rose erects its slender neck  
From its collar of green leaves!

The lips are warm and open, and its whirling head  
Reminds me of all the funny colfures you affect.  
It's a rose of many woods and faces, you'll see  
And that's exactly how you seem to me.

TAMBIMUTTV

# REMEMBRANCE

Wisps  
 of remembrance  
 crisp  
 whorls  
 swirling  
 and hovering  
 importunate  
 at the doorstep  
 Frigates  
 of friable crockery  
 and cracknel crumples  
 brittle to the  
 mind's feeble antennae  
 and the urgent breath  
 Then .....  
 drifts  
 curled and involuted  
 tenuous  
 whirled whistling  
 and the stir  
 of muslin  
 softly sighing at your casements  
 responsive to dimly familiar impacts  
 Vague contact  
 of the mind with old landmarks  
 Luxuriant waddle  
 in the puddles



One S. R.C. 8  
 Recd 11/5 15943  
 The Reg. 5/12

TO MIRIAM

## PREFACE

I have attempted in most of these poems to capture beauty of sound, and ingenuity of texture, in graceful, symmetrical sound-patterns, animated with thought.

From the few criticisms I have received, I am given to understand that I have abnormal hearing and vision but I naturally prefer to believe that this so-called abnormality is actually a higher sense. If any of these poems fail to please, my only excuse is that I have been a conscientious artist, paying the greatest attention to colour and tone and, most important of all, atmosphere. I believe that, in poems like "Monsoon" and "Remembrance," I have created the right atmosphere, and obtained a correct relation of light and shade, in thought and sound, and thus, truth of effect.

"L'Envoi", "Voices", "Mutability" and "Chanson" are earlier poems, and were written in the years 1932 and 1933. I have marked these poems with an asterisk.

Half these poems have been published before. I wish to thank the respective editors for permission to reprint.

M. J. T.

# TONE-PATTERNS MEARY J. TAMBIMUTTU



COLOMBO

AT THE SLAVE ISLAND PRINTING WORKS

1936



of ancient scrub and stone and stubble  
 Relaxation  
 lapse of blood and muscle to lazy  
 masturbation  
 and then  
 the squealing in the blast  
 and onslaught  
 of a baboon horde  
 Lurch and roll and limbo  
 the brake  
 grates  
 Shudder

## FLOUNDER

My heart  
 stumbled  
 i met me  
 as you ambled by  
 I fumbled  
 for the jumbled fumaroles  
 of my heart  
 I floundered and let  
 a fulsome heat  
 beat  
 on a white lily  
 Fiasco  
 Forget  
 a fool and his money

( 6 )

## BAROQUE

Like an anthology of beautiful verse  
 characterless undefined  
 and a spectral disperse  
 Toddling of straw fingers  
 in senseless clay, dull and bleary-eyed  
 Then a newer dust, fresh and young  
 and lisping in a savage tongue  
 without a reason or a meaning  
 yet scarce removed from dim divining  
 a thought  
 yet only an idea  
 without a being and a limit  
 Beauty—incomprehensible  
 impalpable—yet enjoyable  
 Pulchritude of smug ugliness  
 yet only an idea  
 silvering with uncertain light  
 the yet unbroken obelisks of ancient beautiful art  
 That's why on a beautiful moon-bright night  
 my sleep is a cowed head in an assembly of stars  
 for by your plainness is a mystery  
 and you are twain beloved  
 this baroque toy and you

( 7 )



## EXPLANATION

Symphony woofing in a cell  
snobbery in a pub  
i and materialism  
on this sordid crust

I will not coin for you from my mint of unreality  
lest you seek untimely escape from this ephemeral coil  
for this illusion of yours is too happy to be revealed  
poor dear puppets of this little lively stage

To see you grapple with the empty future  
sweat starting at every pore  
believing in the exhalations of paleozoic madness  
analysing your existence  
putrid pleonasm in the understanding of life  
doth jar mightily

The microbe and the fungus in their intellection  
abhor theorizing life  
they know, to be is to be  
and they are

But you fritter away your time in unrealities  
for your material mind  
seeks, hope of material joy to be  
joy is extinction

I, the microbe and the fungus  
materialists?

( 8 )

## MONSOON

zooms the monsoon  
zappelins  
palm-leaves  
whipt to splinters  
seething boisterous hordes tee-hee-E  
shells dropping in no man's-land  
crikey  
the sea is laughing  
catamaran clutter of crudity

## \*VOICES

I heard your name among the flowers  
Breathing soft as April showers  
Where sea-weed whispered on the ocean bed  
I heard your name  
I heard your name echoing through  
The ocean vaults of flowing blue  
Where sea-shells crooned and ripples swooned  
I heard your name

I heard your name in the bamboo laughter  
And the sizzling of the blue lake water  
And in the land of broken hearts  
I, I heard your name

## REVELATION

Tears, sausage tears, dumbly dropping like apples  
more eloquent than cabbages

( 9 )

## HEARTACHE

Rose-petals and woodwind

You

Dismal weeping of Kreisler on the fourteenth harmonic  
iron-rollers on the gravel  
lurching and scrunching

with a jangle of pistons

You in me

This incessant rasp and irritation

rankling as a supreme passion

may make me kill

this other you

and me

and

I will slide through the centuries

scottless and blind

noiseless as a ghost

gliding on the weeds of the wind

and in each tangle

fumble

for something I have lost

and cannot remember

Through interplanetary space

slinking

like a fox with one eye

I will go

searching

searching

( 10 )

for a sensation I have lost

and cannot remember

..... thus it is

I found

it's better to have you and suffer  
than not to have you at all

## MUTABILITY

Behold the caterpillar crawl today.

Amoeba-like, a blotch of sombre grey.

Tomorrow, see him draped in red and gold,

Inflame each ferny bank and withy wold.

Behold the white-ant flit today on wings

Of gauzy fineness—most hyaline of things

But see the moro bath left him wingless, shorn,

He's but a worm, a crawling worm forlorn.

Thus must this worldly windmill run its course,

The rich be crushed, penny find a close;

Thus must the proud detrued crawl and groan,

The low exalted reap the good they've sown.

## ABSTRACTION

Blue shadows sprawl on the wall

The soul gapes to an inner life in life

Rub rub rub this consciousness

RUB

R

U

B

damn

( 11 )

## ESCAPE

dust  
life was once  
dusk  
and dust  
damn!  
skybird  
pop  
curse  
dust and dust  
what a life!  
lover  
dead  
skyfaror  
done to death  
bird  
a bird  
death and dust  
detrusion  
disembougement  
deliberate depletion  
dust and damp and debris decrepit  
daubed with blood  
damp  
so damp .....  
.....  
i am desolate  
disconsolate  
and i crane  
to the pool of the sky

( 12 )

wrinkled  
and damp  
delightfully  
and in oness with my beloved  
damp  
so damp  
death and dust and debris  
daubed with blood  
delicious  
the damp,  
the oneness.....

dust  
life was once  
dusk  
and dust  
damn!

## •CHANSON

Of my hunger and thirst  
you found nourishment  
in the vain longing of my heart  
your consolation  
in the vagueness of the never-returning day  
intangibility of thought  
confusion of hours  
you found the realization of day and night  
peace

( 13 )



and the passage of hours

You have built your halls with my heart's dust  
your castles on the ruins of my life  
your hope  
of my failures

your indifference

of my love

But what may be, I do not cry or complain  
because I gave you all my tears  
long ago

and since you seem so happy in your indifference  
what care I ?

## WOMAN

Incursion into India of the ukelele

land of the lotus and flaming temples

heavy with filigree and figurines

four-stringed Maori toad

but it cheered me by the whistling stream

strafed, strafed

quashed Stradivarius by the whistling stream

Incursion into me of you

was there a need

a necessity ?

i do not know

but you were also beauty

i carved a niche for you

## ESCAPE

A square ball rolled on the ground

( 14 )

## RECALESCENCE

Warm fires, red fires glowing fierce and red  
rough scrubbage and rags and bone and rectilinear logs  
and scabrous trash and weeviled wistaria  
burning

crackling and woofling

sahara

and sahara

A douche

of pagan nonpareil

sailed

on my unawareness

i was left

smoking, smoking

limp and plasticized

a ruin of palsied cinders

then

your breath

and recalescence

and death

Woman

who plays with toys

a toy

has a heart

I

A square pillar stood in the market-place

for all to see

i broke it

hee, hee!

( 15 )



## LANDSCAPE

Blob in the distance  
ink, dark ink  
electric fizzle on the skyline  
stilted shadows  
zooming gratingly crookedly on the ground  
Ground GROUND  
Grind and grate  
Dum. Dum. fizzle, POP  
Balloons  
BALLOONS

## L'ENVOI

Friend of the morrow, I have wrought my work;  
The days of toil are ended and I rest;  
The work I laboured at so meekly, sweetly,  
Now 'tis thine. 'Twas I that loved it best.  
Hopa of the morrow, fill again my breast!  
Rise, rise again in all thy sweetness, rise!  
Tell me I laboured not in vain; this work  
One heart shall love, oh just one pair of eyes!  
Take, kindly hand, the image I have wrought,  
And turn it softly in thy glowing hands.  
Let trickle through false tawdries and the trusel  
Bear the rest to isles of golden sands,  
Where school-boy fears and hopes and consolations  
Which perbance in youth thou may'st have seen,  
Thou'lt find arrayed, as in the days of old,  
The same delights and sorrows that have been.